



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

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DATE: September 4, 2025 for September 11, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Review of Academic Programs and Units, UTSC: Department of Health and Society and its Undergraduate Programs

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under section 5.7 of the Terms of Reference of the University of Toronto Scarborough Academic Affairs Committee (UTSC AAC) provides that the Committee “shall receive for information and discussion reviews of academic programs and/or units consistent with the protocol outlined in the *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process*. The reviews are forwarded to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs for consideration.”

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. **UTSC Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (September 11, 2025)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

- Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P), April 10, 2025 [For Information]. The Committee was satisfied with the Dean’s Administrative Response. No follow-up report was requested.
- Academic Board, May 29, 2025 [For Information]. The Board was satisfied with the Report from AP&P.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The *Cyclical Program Review Protocol* “is used to ensure University of Toronto programs meet the highest standards of academic excellence” (UTQAP, Section 6.1). The *Protocol* applies to all undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered by the University, and the University’s full complement of undergraduate and graduate degree and diploma programs are reviewed on a planned cycle. Reviews are conducted on a regular basis, and the interval between program reviews must not exceed eight (8) years.

- The external review of academic programs requires:
- The establishment of a terms of reference;
- The selection of a review team;
- The preparation of a self study;
- A site visit;
- Receipt of a report from the external review team;
- The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs’ formal request for an Administrative Response;
- The formal Administrative Response, combining responses from the Dean and Vice-Principal Academic, as well as from the Chairs/Directors of the relevant programs and/or units; and
- The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

In accordance with the *Protocol*, an external review of the Department of Health and Society and its undergraduate programs was commissioned for the 2023-24 academic year. During a site visit held March 20-21, 2024, the review team met with a wide range of stakeholders, including UTSC senior academic administrators, the Department Chair, and faculty, staff, and students in the Department.

The reviewers complimented the department’s “unique and highly valuable blend of courses” that approach health from multiple disciplinary perspectives, noting that “students graduate with a more holistic view of health and society.” They also highlighted the Department’s efforts to incorporate universal design principles and proactive disability-related accommodations, particularly in upper-year courses. Furthermore, the reviewers commended the teaching faculty’s content expertise and engagement with research and skills development in teaching and learning.

In their report, the review team recommended:

- Considering future strategic directions for the Population Health and Health Policy programs
- Streamlining processes for course modifications and retirements, and aligning course offerings with strategic goals and teaching capacity
- Establishing mechanisms to ensure core and elective courses, class sizes, and teaching releases are equitably balanced for faculty
- Offering equitable access to research space for dry lab researchers and their teams to cultivate collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students
- Consulting with faculty and allocating temporary space to meet current needs in advance of the planned move to the Scarborough Academic of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH)
- Creating additional opportunities and resources for community building and support within the department, especially during stressful periods

- Developing a strategic research and academic plan with a clear vision and mission to guide departmental priorities and commitments
- Focusing on recruitment, retention, and success of Indigenous students, with attention paid to barriers affecting their participation in undergraduate experience and mentorship

In response to these recommendations, the Department has:

- Initiated regular curriculum reviews, taking into consideration enrolment data, student feedback, and learning outcomes of low-enrolment courses to ensure continued relevance
- Modified its two Major programs and updated their names to enhance distinctiveness and reduce stakeholder confusion
- Introduced new courses, including *Applied Statistics for Public Health* (HLTB27H3), *Creative Research Practices in Aging* (HLTC53H3), and *Black Community Health: Education and Promotion* (HLTD82H3), to address knowledge gaps and provide applied skills in areas such as health communication, promotion, and literacy
- Launched its first departmental Research Day to showcase student and faculty research and cultivate a sense of belonging, inclusion, and recognition

The Department will also:

- Contribute to discussions and proposals for expanding health science programming across campus
- Explore the development of a teaching equity policy, in consultation with the Dean's Office, to ensure the equitable distribution of teaching responsibilities
- Align research priorities with the Department's strategic plan, mission, and values, noting the importance of consolidating and strengthening interdisciplinary priority clusters
- Develop a section on the departmental website to highlight research and coursework relevant to Indigenous initiatives

Additionally, the Dean's Office has provided the Department with a permanent staff member to support students enrolled in the Certificate in Pathways to Health Professions, an initiative housed within the Department. The Dean's Office will also:

- Continue working with the Department to address issues around current workload in relation to student enrolment
- Partner with the Department to plan future program offerings, positioning it as a key contributor to cross-disciplinary initiatives in the health sciences, especially with the establishment of SAMIH
- Maintain regular dialogue with the Department Chair and the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation to consider how best to bolster research supports and cluster development
- Collaborate with the Department and other UTSC offices on identifying and removing barriers to access for students enrolled in the Department's programs

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of these recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Health and Society. A brief progress report will be submitted to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs midway between the March 2024 site visit and the next scheduled review. The next external review of the Department is set for no later than the 2031-32 academic year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no net financial implications to the campus' operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is presented for information only.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

1. Review Report (June 18, 2024)
2. Provostial Request for Administrative Response (November 25, 2024)
3. Administrative Response (March 11, 2025)
4. Provostial Final Assessment Report and Implemental Plan (July 24, 2025)

UTQAP Cyclical Review Report

Framework for UTQAP reviews:

UTQAP processes support a structured approach for creating, reflecting on, assessing and developing plans to change and improve academic programs and units in the context of institutional and divisional commitments and priorities.

The University of Toronto (U of T), in its [*Statement of Institutional Purpose*](#) (1992), articulates its mission as a commitment "to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of excellent quality." Thus "quality assurance through assessment of new program proposals and review of academic programs and units in which they reside is a priority for the University...:

The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching are the foundations of academic excellence. More generally, all of the factors that contribute to collegial and scholarly life—academic and administrative complement, research and scholarly activity, infrastructure, governance, etc.—bear on the quality of academic programs and the broad educational experience of students. ([*Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*](#) (2010))

The University's approach to quality assurance is built on two primary indicators of academic excellence: the quality of the scholarship and research of faculty; and the success with which that scholarship and research is brought to bear on the achievement of Degree-Level Expectations.

These indicators are assessed by determining how our scholarship, research and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and how well our programs meet their Degree-Level Expectations.

Reviews provide the opportunity to celebrate successes, identify areas where we can do better and vigorously pursue improvements.

Review Report:

Independent expert review is foundational to the Cyclical Program Review process. The Review Report addresses the Terms of Reference to provide insights and recommendations that inform the continuous improvement of the academic program(s) and academic unit(s) under review. Reflecting this commitment to continuous improvement, the final review report is considered a public document and 1) will be circulated within the unit; 2) may be posted on the unit’s website; and 3) will be shared with external reviewers at the time of the next review.

Issues that are addressed through existing, specific University procedures are considered **out of scope** for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns). **Any such issues raised at any point during a review process** (self-study, site visit, review report) **must immediately be brought to the attention of the commissioning officer and routed through appropriate University channels for resolution.**

<p>As Commissioning Officer, I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Report addresses the Terms of Reference, which reflect the requirements outlined in the UTQAP, including the program evaluation criteria. ✓ I have brought to the attention of the reviewers any clear factual errors in the report and the reviewers have corrected these. ✓ I have brought to the attention of the reviewers any omitted UTQAP requirements. 	
<p>Commissioning Officer*: Professor William A. Gough, Vice-Principal Academic & Dean</p>	<p>Report Accepted as Final on June 18, 2024</p>

Reviewers are asked to provide a Report that:

- Responds to the Terms of Reference, which reflect the requirements outlined in the UTQAP, including the program evaluation criteria.
- Recognizes the institution’s autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation. Any commentary or recommendations on issues that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes (e.g., such as faculty complement and/or space requirements) must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability.
- Respects the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process.

<p>Program(s) under review:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Humanities: Min (Arts) • Health Studies – Health Policy, BA: Maj and Co-op • Health Studies – Population Health, B.Sc.: Maj and Co-op • Health Studies: Min (Arts) (suspended)
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Division/unit under review:	Department of Health and Society
Commissioning officer:	Professor William A. Gough, Vice-Principal Academic & Dean
Date of scheduled review:	Wednesday, March 20, 2024 and Thursday, March 21, 2024
Reviewers' names and affiliations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tania Bubela, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada• Michelle M. Garrison, Professor, Department of Public Health, Purdue University, Indiana, USA• Lili Liu, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

A. Summary & Overall Assessment

Please provide a summary of your findings, focusing on the assessment of the division/unit and the program(s) under review relative to the best in Canada/North America and internationally, including areas of strength and opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) initiated an external review of its Department of Health and Society (DHS). The review team visited the campus from March 20-21, 2024 and met with the Dean, Vice-Deans, and Associate Deans of UTSC, the Chair of DHS, The DHS Executive Team, the UTSC Chief Librarian, a group of student leaders, the DHS Curriculum Committee, the team from the Registrar's Office, UTSC quality assurance process administrators, DHS administrative staff, DHS faculty members, and the Interim Associate Vice-Principal Research & Innovation (See Appendix 1). In preparation, the review team considered a self-study document prepared by DHS (2024), a self-study document prepared by Health Studies (2016), a previous UTQAP Cyclical Review of Health Studies (2016), a UTQAP summary and administrative response to the 2016 review, the academic calendar, a report on library resources at UTSC, data from co-op programs, DHS standardized data on research and scholarship provided by University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process Cyclical Review of Units and Program, academic data analytics from the UTSC Registrar's Office, a compendium of faculty curricula vitae, and slide presentations on DHS and the UTSC co-op program provided to the review team during the site visit.

We found an organization chart on the reporting structure of the UTSC in relation to the St. George and Mississauga campuses.

The review team has structured this report in accordance with University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Terms of Reference (See Appendix 2), commenting on (1) program objectives and key features, including (a) program requirements for undergraduate and graduate students, (b) assessment of teaching and learning, (c) admission requirements, (d) resources for undergraduate and graduate programs, and (e) quality and other indicators; (2) faculty and research; (3) relationships; (4) organizational and financial structure; (5) long-range planning challenges; and (6) comparators.

BACKGROUND

The DHS was created in 2020. Prior to 2020 a health studies program was housed in the Department of Anthropology, and this legacy has led to path dependencies that impact the operations and programming within DHS. In 2016, the Health Studies programs (Population Health: Major (BSc) and Co-

op and Health Policy: Major (BA) and Co-op) were reviewed by a team of three external reviewers.¹ The 2016 reviewers commended the program for attracting a large and growing number of students, in part, due to limited admission requirements. That review identified major issues and made recommendations to rectify structural deficits and to build a strong and nationally recognized Department of Health Studies. Specifically, the reviewers recommended the recruitment of a strategic and visionary academic leader; a single course of study in health sciences leading to either a BA or a BSc; the hiring of tenured and tenure-stream faculty, recruited into 2-3 core areas of research strengths that are complementary to related programs at other University of Toronto campuses; and adequate administrative support for the unit in light of the large number of undergraduate students it serves, so that these duties are not inappropriately assigned to temporary or non-tenure track faculty.

Following the 2016 external review, the Office of the Dean of UTSC committed to exploring administrative structures for health studies. It first became an Extra-Departmental Unit (EDU: B), the Interdisciplinary Centre for Health and Society, whereby it gained budgetary and academic autonomy and a distinctive identity, vision and scope, while growing both a faculty complement and student body. It gained Department status as the Department of Health and Society (DHS) in 2020.

The DHS aspires to focus its multi-disciplinary research areas on: (1) **Research in Life Course and the Life Cycle**, which encompasses reproductive health, early childhood development, adolescence, gerontology, and intergenerational health contexts; (2) **Social Hierarchies and Marginality**, which encompasses health and illness as public issues that reflect prevailing social relations, inequities, and regimes of normalcy—including those that shape migrant and immigrant health, people in the Global North and South, Indigenous Peoples, Black communities across Canada, LGBTQ2S+ communities, and people living with disability; (3) **Cultures of Health and Illness**, which emphasizes the observational and interpretive skills needed to understand health humanities as well as experiences of healthcare, illness, disability and ableism in community health settings and areas including health communication, therapeutic practice, and creative expression; and (4) **Environment and Health**, which is concerned with aspects of the natural and built environment that shape health and well-being, including social, cultural, economic, and political conditions and health care systems.

The DHS leadership consists of a Chair and two Associate Chairs, overseeing research and undergraduate educational programs, respectively. In its brief history since 2020, the Department has had two Chairs and one acting Chair. The first Chair recruited to lead the department moved into the UTSC Dean's office, resulting in the Dean searching and appointing a recently-tenured faculty member, Dr. Michelle Silver to serve as Acting Chair, who eventually became the Chair. An acting Chair was appointed while Dr. Silver took a research and study leave, and she has since returned to serve as Chair.

¹ *UTQAP Cyclical Review Health Studies – Population Health: Major (BSc) and Co-op Health Studies – Health Policy: Major (BA) and Co-op (June 2016) - Reviewers: Olena Hankivsky, School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University; Elizabeth Watkins, Department of Anthropology, History and Social Medicine, University of California, San Francisco; and Annalee Yassi, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia*

Since 2016, there have been 16 faculty hires, 11 of these took place between 2020-2024. Between 2020 and 2023, DHS hired 10 new faculty to reach its current complement of 21 faculty members (3 teaching stream, 14 tenure stream, 2 part-time faculty, and 2 Contractually Limited Term Appointments (CLTAs), one of whom holds an administrative appointment in the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation. Of these, ten are Assistant Professors (4 on leave during the 2023-24 academic year and one with a 51% appointment in the Department of Sociology), five of which are Associate Professors (one is teaching stream and holds an administrative appointment in the Dean's Office, one holds an administrative appointment as Chair, another holds an administrative appointment as Associate Chair, and another is on leave), and three are Professors (one holds a full-time administrative appointment in the Office of the Vice-Principal Academic, and another is the Vice-Dean who has never taught in the unit).

In effect, during the 2023-2024 academic year, DHS could rely for teaching on: 5.5 Assistant Professors (2 in the teaching stream); 4 Associate Professors, 1 with an administrative teaching reduction; 1 Professor; 1 CTLA; and one part-time instructor (started in Winter 2024). In addition, the unit relies on 30 to 40 sessional instructors for teaching. The normal load for tenure stream faculty in DHS is 2.0 Full Course Equivalent (FCE) per year, with 1.5 FCE for undergraduate and 0.5 FCE for graduate teaching. The normal annual load for teaching stream faculty is 3.0 FCEs, all of which are allocated to undergraduate teaching. For CTLA and part-time faculty, the normal teaching load is 2.0 FCEs of undergraduate teaching. Prior to their interim review for promotion, both pre-tenure and teaching stream faculty members receive a reduction in teaching of 1.0 FCE over a three-year period. Following a successful interim review and contract renewal, these faculty receive additional reductions in the following semester following their review. Faculty members who hold administrative positions also receive negotiated teaching relief commensurate with the position. All faculty are expected to contribute to service activities within DHS and to undertake external service as appropriate.

Currently DHS has approximately 1200 undergraduate students enrolled; approximately 800 students are in the Population Health major program (HBSc), 160 are in the Health Policy program major (HBA), 158 are in the Health Humanities Minor; and 128 are in the new Specialist in Paramedicine Program. Across both the HBSc and HBA majors within DHS, approximately 1/6 of each are currently enrolled in the co-op program.

DHS currently has only two dedicated staff members (the Program Coordinator and the Chair's Assistant) and five staff who are shared with between three departments (a Manager of Finance and Administration, a Teaching Assistant Coordinator, a Research Communications Coordinator, and a Financial Assistant); the Administrative Assistant is shared between six departments and will soon retire.

Faculty members in DHS hold non-exclusive, graduate appointments in 12 units at the University of Toronto: Geography & Planning (1); Dalla Lana School of Public Health (5); the Institute of Health Policy, Management & Evaluation (IHPME) (2); Physical & Environmental Sciences (2); Pharmacology and Toxicology (1); English (1); Psychiatry (1); Sociology (3), Anthropology (1); Social Work (1); History (1); and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) (1).

B. Findings

Based on your reading of the self-study and discussions during the site visit, please address all the Terms of Reference (appended) as follows:

- **Confirm that you have considered each of the Terms of Reference in relation to each academic program and/or academic unit listed in the Terms of Reference.**
- Comment on the program(s)/unit(s) respective **strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities for enhancement**. In so doing, please:
 - Identify the **distinctive attributes** of each program listed in the Terms of Reference
 - Identify and commend any **notably strong and creative attributes**
 - Provide evidence of any **significant innovation or creativity** in content and/or delivery relative to other such programs
- Ensure that the findings address, for each program listed in the Terms of Reference, the quality of each academic program and the learning environment of the students in each program.
- *Note: Unless a specific program or group of programs is specified, the assumption will be that findings apply to all programs listed in the Terms of Reference.*

OBSERVED STRENGTHS

The current reviewers commend UTSC leadership and the faculty and staff affiliated with the DHS in advancing recommendations from the 2016 review. The current DHS leadership, particularly the Chair, Dr. Michelle Silver, brings increased and welcomed stability to DHS. Such stability is essential to meet the ambitions of the unit and UTSC as they expand into health-related educational programming and research. In the past three years, DHS has been able to recruit exceptional tenure and teaching-stream faculty, who, with attention paid to their retention, comprise a solid base from which to expand the DHS to meet student demand for health-relevant programming; employer demand in the health and healthcare sectors; and national/international demand for research that addresses the areas of strength identified by DHS.

The review team met with twelve DHS undergraduate students, the majority of whom held leadership positions within DHS affiliated student organizations. None of the students who participated in this meeting are in the co-op stream, possibly due to scheduling limitations. The students emphasized the strength of DHS educational programming in meeting its objective of foregrounding social determinants of health and health equity across courses. The students were highly complimentary of the quality of instruction, the availability and flexibility of most faculty to accommodate student needs, and the creation of safe learning environments in which students could bring their diverse lived experience to discussions of complex health and social issues. However, they also identified some gaps in curriculum

and student support, as discussed below.

While data are limited for reasons common across Canada, UTSC and DHS attract a highly diverse student body and faculty complement. This diversity is reflective of the needs of underserved populations in the Scarborough region and addresses Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) priorities for educational institutions and research funders, provincially, nationally and internationally.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities arise from the creation of the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH) and associated infrastructure, including a new building, in 2026. According to the Self-Study report, members of DHS have been involved in the development of SAMIH in collaboration with the University of Toronto's Temerty Faculty of Medicine, Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, other allied health professions, local hospitals and health networks. It is anticipated that SAMIH will graduate up to 30 physicians, 30 physician assistants, 30 nurse practitioners, 40 physical therapists and the UTSC contribution of 300 undergraduate students per year. DHS will be the only UTSC unit that locates its entire faculty members within the building that will house SAMIH. This may address some of the current resource and infrastructure limitations discussed below.

In 2022, health spending accounted for 12.2 percent of Canada's gross domestic product. To meet the rising demand for health and social services with Canada's aging population, health sector employers, whether public, private, government and non-profit entities, require a workforce grounded in understanding of public and population health, social determinants of health, data and evidence-informed decision making, and health equity. Student demand for health-relevant programming across the country remains high, for example, in the institutions represented by the reviewers, enrolment has never fallen below targets, and could, indeed be expanded. In the Self-Study report, the DHS lists similar health and society interdisciplinary undergraduate programming in Canadian universities, such as McMaster, Queen's, Waterloo, Simon Fraser, Calgary, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatchewan, Windsor, Wilfred Laurier, and York.

However, **the review team believes that the faculty and staff complement of DHS will need to be strengthened to sustain itself and leverage the opportunities generated by SAMIH.** We agree with the assessment in the DHS Self-Study report that there is a need to increase the faculty complement to address the high student to core faculty ratio (currently 110 students to 1 faculty member available to teach courses), to refine programming and the expansion of experiential opportunities, and to strengthen clusters of faculty in areas of core research strength. Without an improved student to faculty ratio, the DHS cannot contemplate starting its own graduate program, or make sustainable progress towards many departmental and UTSC goals for their undergraduate programs.

With respect to research, the strategic priorities of many post-secondary institutions follow current trends from national and international organizations and research funders towards convergence research. These organizations and funders recognize that global challenges in health and society cannot

be addressed from disciplinary silos, but instead require an inter- or trans-disciplinary approach. Many of these challenges are outlined in the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). While SDG #3 specifically addresses Good Health and Well-Being, many of the other SDGs have a strong link to the social and environmental determinants of health, such as poverty reduction, food security, gender equity, education, clean water and sanitation, and climate and environment. Examples of the shift in funder priorities are the Canadian New Frontiers Research Fund, Horizon funding from the European Union, and European Horizon funding programs, and the National Science Foundation in the United States.

With an enhanced research-intensive faculty complement, DHS is poised to make significant contributions from an interdisciplinary perspective to wicked problems relevant to the SDGs as well as to Canadian challenges of an aging population, health equity, including ableism, Indigenous health, and structural and institutional racism in the health and social sectors. Grounded in an underserved region of Greater Toronto, DHS faculty and students are well-positioned to meet the complex challenges of the diverse populations of the Scarborough region. Indeed, it is positioned to instantiate in faculty, research and teaching, the principles of the *Scarborough Charter* to address anti-Black racism and promote Black inclusion in Canadian higher education - that bears the name of the region.

EVALUATION

In commenting on the respective strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities for enhancement of the DHS and its educational programming, we recognize the UTSC's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation. However, we premise our report on the strategic benefits to the UTSC in strengthening its interdisciplinary health faculty, research, and educational programming, especially in light of the opportunities discussed above.

One caveat to our discussion is the lack of transparency in the resource allocation model employed to make strategic decisions within UTSC, especially to reallocate funding to support emerging areas of strength. During our visit, it was intimated that the funding model is in the process of being reformed to one that we are more familiar within our institutions, or more aligned with the main campus, namely, a transition from a historical expense-based assessment of resourcing to some form of activity-based budgeting, for example, based on numbers of students in programs and courses.

PROGRAMS

DISTINCTIVE ATTRIBUTES OF PROGRAMS

Programs, especially Population Health, are in high demand, but not always apparent to high school students when applying to UofT – potentially both due to low awareness of high school students and counselors of this as an option, but also due to inconsistent information about the department's programs on the broader UofT website, including pages aimed at prospective undergraduates. According to the students we spoke with, the two Health Studies Programs are increasingly preferred by some students as a pathway to the health professions or graduate studies, instead of degree programs

that exclusively focus on the biomedical sciences. There is high diversity among the students who strongly endorsed the Department of Health and Society for instructors' ability to create safe spaces that allow students to be comfortable with their diversity.

NOTABLY STRONG AND CREATIVE ATTRIBUTES

The department and its curricular offerings provide a unique and highly valuable blend of courses that approach health from biological science, from public health, and from medical humanities – while there are many programs at peer universities that blend biological sciences and public health, and some (mostly at smaller liberal arts colleges) which blend public health and medical humanities, these degree programs work in all three together in a way that can lead to graduates with a more holistic view of health and society, a broader lens on future career opportunities to help them find their niche, and a human-centered lens prepared for their next step in further education or careers as health care professionals, researchers, administrators, advocates, and others.

EVIDENCE OF CREATIVITY IN CONTENT AND/OR DELIVERY RELATIVE TO OTHER PROGRAMS

The experiential learning opportunities afforded students in the department's programs are to be commended, from service-based learning within program required and elective courses, to internships and undergraduate research experiences, to the co-op programs. The department developed a range of experiential learning given relative newness of the programs and department, as well as the strained teaching capacity – because while incredibly valuable in terms of the impact on the student learning experience and outcomes, such a teaching approach is also typically far more time intensive for the instructors than traditional classroom-based teaching. However, the reviewers heard that there are barriers to the co-op program, such as expense and the required number of work terms, which may limit the program's growth.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND KEY FEATURES

Note that unless a specific program or group of programs is specified, the findings apply to all programs listed in the reviewers' Terms of Reference

1) Consistency of the program's objectives with the institution's mission and the unit's academic plans, priorities and commitments.

While the UTSC has a strategic plan, the reviewers did not see a clear strategic plan from DHS. Therefore, it is challenging to understand how the DHS aligns with the UTSC's strategic plan. Without a Vision, Mission, Values and signature or key strategic initiatives, the DHS lacks a road map to direct its path and growth into the future. Over the next two years, prior to the opening of SAMIH, the DHS has an opportunity to clearly articulate its role as leader in this new space, co-located with Medicine and other entry-level programs for health and allied health professions. What can the DHS offer that the other two campuses do not? For example, could the DHS leverage its track record in attracting students and future scholars whose strength focus on health equity in a diverse and underserved communities east of Toronto. A strategic plan would frame DHS' academic plans, priorities, and commitments, and thereby guide DHS in future hires, the establishment of research clusters, and design of a graduate program so that faculty members are not relying on other units to recruit highly qualified personnel.

2) Factors considered in the context of the program and its associated resources:

2.1. Universal design principles and/or the potential need to provide mental or physical disability-related accommodations.

The adoption of universal design principles and pro-active disability-related accommodations appears to be a strength within the department's programs, but with some inconsistencies in implementation. Evidence of this universal design approaches and effective accommodations was seen within the co-op programs, which was especially impressive given that this is an area that often lags behind classroom-based teaching in adoption of these approaches at peer universities. Examples included providing students with an online platform that provides on-demand mock interview practice and automated feedback; providing resources and problem-solving regarding whether, when, and how to disclose disabilities to a co-op employer; and engaging all co-op students in skill development during pre-placement and problem-solving during placement regarding interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, and time management.

Based on review of course syllabi, discussions with faculty, and comments by students, it was evident that the faculty care deeply about student learning experience and learning outcomes. However, especially when teaching the larger more introductory courses, it appears faculty feel constrained to content delivery and assessment approaches that are more feasible to implement with limited teaching capacity. These offer fewer opportunities to implement universal design approaches and accommodations at more than a superficial level.

In upper-level courses, the greater flexibility in approach afforded by the smaller class sizes appears to have made the use of universal design approaches and implementation of accommodations more seamless and effective. What barriers to effective accommodations students report in these classes appear largely due to institutional challenges, including the process for accommodations approvals and perceived inconsistencies across faculty in how they interpret and implement the accommodations even when syllabi contain the same language (such as related to acceptance of late assignments), and the degree to which not all students feel comfortable or able to request accommodations due to cultural and documentation barriers.

2.2. Support for student well-being and sense of community in the learning and teaching environment.

Students in this program demonstrate camaraderie (especially within the department's student organization). They report that the learning environment is one in which they feel valued by faculty and staff and safe in integrating their lived experience into their classroom learning. Nevertheless, a clear theme emerged from both student comments and discussions with staff and more junior faculty about the need for additional opportunities for community building and support. Examples include: departmental orientation, social activities held by and/or with DHS faculty and staff rather than solely by the student organizations, and support activities and resources during stressful times both common (such as exam weeks) and unexpected (such as during difficult events in the community or news that may disproportionately impact many students). Department and program staff expressed a desire to be able to provide such opportunities and resources but reported difficulty staying on top of even core

responsibilities (especially among those split across multiple departments); they feel spread too thin to take these additional tasks on. Given that peer institutions are providing such opportunities and resources at the department or program level to cultivate a culture of caring and a sense of belonging, especially among minoritized and first-generation university students, additional resources to support this work for such a vibrantly growing set of degree programs is merited.

2.3. Opportunities for Indigenous students and community

The DHS currently does not collect data on students who self-identify as Indigenous, however, this type of equity data will soon be collected at UofT. The UTSC hosts several Indigenous initiatives (e.g., Indigenous House, Indigenous Garden, Indigenous Place Making, Global Field School: Indigenous Costa Rica, Indigenous Entrepreneurship, Indigenous Knowledges and Resources), but most of these seem to be associated with the Sociology program. It is not clear to what extent, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the DHS can access these initiatives. Again, with a clear strategic plan, the DHS could specify how its students can engage in these initiatives through their academic curricula. In particular, it would be important to identify Indigenous students and monitor their recruitment, retention and success rates, as well as to explore whether Indigenous students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship.

The review team recognizes that the DHS has at least one Indigenous faculty member, and other faculty members whose scholarship focus on Indigenous health and wellbeing. However, the review team did not meet with Indigenous students nor community partners.

2.4. Opportunities for Black students and inclusive excellence

This is difficult to assess as the DHS currently does not appear to have access to race or ethnicity stratified data from UTSC, nor does it collect its own equity-focused data. As equity data become available, the DHS can provide metrics to address the level of success related to removing barriers and increasing retention rates for Black students.

An innovative program that benefits all students who struggle to complete their program is the “Get Finished” initiative which provides funding to students who have up to 2.5 credits of courses remaining to earn a degree.

DHS currently offers a “Black Student Excellence Award” for three undergraduate students each year who identify as Black and are chosen based on submitted applications detailing academic excellence as well as leadership and/or community engagement, as well as a separate essay award for work in Black Health studies.

As is seen in peer institutions, a significant proportion of Black students appear (based on student and faculty discussions) to be drawn to the mentorship of Black faculty. The danger is that this results in disproportionate mentoring workload. We did not identify clear mechanisms in place to increase the sustainability of informal mentorship, for example, by taking it into account in the tenure and promotion process, service load, or research space allocations. Similar patterns may also exist for faculty who share one or more other minoritized identities with students.

2.5. Opportunities for fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive teaching and learning environment

Anecdotally, both students and faculty reported that the learning environment was one in which they felt able to share lived experience, engage in challenging conversations, and centre health equity. Some students reported changing from their initially planned major to one within DHS specifically due to the warmth and inclusion they experienced within DHS classes. However, prospective data collection — whether via de-identified administrative data, survey or focus groups conducted by experienced facilitators from outside the department — would be helpful in identifying the barriers to equity, diversity, and inclusion that may be less likely to come to the fore via mechanisms where participation may be low or responses may be inhibited due to the power dynamics inherent to academia. We note that the review team did not meet alone with students.

2.6. Initiatives that enhance the quality of the program and the associated learning and teaching environment.

DHS has made clear and effective progress towards improving the first year core course sequence – in terms of ensuring that students have the opportunity 1) to develop a shared vocabulary together for subsequent coursework, 2) to acquire adequate exposure to different domain areas within health studies to make informed choices about future course selection, and 3) to begin developing the skills to seek, evaluate, and discuss social determinants of health equity locally, nationally, and globally.

3) Program requirements

3.1. Appropriateness of program requirements

Although there have been significant and meaningful improvements in DHS curricular quality, alignment, and teaching capacity since the 2016 review, there remains considerable concern that the department has not had access to the faculty and staff capacity to adequately and systematically develop and implement strategic plans to ensure that their degree programs, including their required and selective course offerings, are the best fit for student and departmental needs.

As brought forward during the 2016 review, there does not seem to be adequate benefit to the department, faculty, and/or students in continuing to maintain the two distinct undergraduate majors (Population Health and Health Policy) in contrast to the added administrative, teaching, and advising burdens. The evidence that the broader UTSC website itself appears to have incorrect or missing information about the two different majors further highlights how the split creates confusion for institutional administration and prospective students. The Specialist program proposed by the department is one way the department could take advantage of existing required courses and allow students to choose from clusters of electives that represent the fundamental domains of health studies. A unified Major program could potentially use the same general approach, with strong consideration given to limiting to those cluster domains from which the department has multiple faculty able to teach.

3.2. Appropriateness of Program Structure

The UTSC undergraduate degree expectations included in Appendix L of the Self-Study report focus on

the following domains, each of which appear to be met by the current undergraduate programs, although some potentially with greater excellence than others:

Breadth of Knowledge: The overall breadth of knowledge presented to students in core required course and offered in selective and elective courses is wide, allowing students excellent opportunities to develop a shared vocabulary and knowledge set to draw on in subsequent depth and/or application focused classes, and to identify areas of interest for further undergraduate or graduate study. This breadth is a key strength of the program and, if well messaged, can help set the program apart from peers going forward. Although similar undergraduate programs at peer universities draw on both the biological and social sciences, the integration with the humanities is both novel and beneficial for the academic and professional paths these students move on to post-graduation — foundational understanding of and experience with the arts, history, cultural perspectives, philosophy, and ethics are increasingly recognized by both the health professions and the field of public health as being crucial to achieve holistic and person-centered gains in health and health equity.

Depth of Knowledge: Opportunities for depth of knowledge development are strong in areas related to health equity and social determinants of health, which is well aligned with faculty expertise, student interests, and workforce needs. Although students and faculty have both identified areas where depth opportunities are currently not as strong as would be desired — such as in epidemiology — faculty shared plans for increasing knowledge depth in these areas via greater laddering of content across the curriculum. These plans have strong potential to be successful if there is focused faculty hiring to expand research and teaching expertise within focused cluster areas aligned with these needs.

Knowledge of Methodologies: Overall, knowledge of methodologies of the field are well presented for an undergraduate degree program and appear to help students develop adequate methodological knowledge to consider new information in the context of its methodological origins, and to take this into account in considering the validity and generalizability of the conclusions.

Application of Knowledge: Across C & D level courses in the degree programs, students have multiple engaging opportunities to apply their existing knowledge and experience, frame “next step” questions from an intellectually curious perspective, identify knowledge gaps, and use a variety of strategies to seek new knowledge in a targeted fashion to address those gaps. In addition to application of knowledge in more traditionally academic exercises, students in the degree program also have opportunities for this knowledge application and growth process via experiential learning. However, there appear to be 1) student barriers to participation in co-op programs, 2) teaching capacity barriers to consistent and predictable availability of course-based experiential learning, and 3) inadequate research space for dry labs limiting the ability of faculty to meaningfully and sustainably engage all interested undergraduates in their research, each limiting the ability of the program to promise all students the full range of knowledge application opportunities in line with UTSC’s institutional strengths and strategic goals.

Awareness of Limits of Knowledge: The curriculum structure and the faculty appear to do an excellent job helping students learn to consider the external and internal validity of the information they learn

and evaluate. Although a wide number of courses draw on library liaison assistance in syllabi preparation or in guest lectures to address information literacy in ways specific to the course, it appears this currently occurs in a largely ad hoc manner, potentially resulting in gaps in this increasingly critical skill set.

Communication Skills: Examination of course syllabi as well as discussions with students and faculty provided ample evidence that the degree program is effective in helping students learn to listen and read critically and with intellectual curiosity, and that the C & D level courses especially provide opportunities for students to grow in their skills communicating for academic audiences both orally and in writing. Skill development around communicating to non-academic audiences appears to be less intentionally woven across the curriculum and opportunities for practice appear more ad hoc and based on individual instructor decisions regarding course assignments. However, addressing this in an effective way earlier on in the curriculum has typically at peer institutions required a lower student to faculty ratio than this department currently has.

Autonomy and Professional Capacity: The undergraduate degree programs of the department appear to be succeeding in meeting this expectation, especially as evidenced from the conversation with students, in which they consistently showed themselves to be informed, creative thinkers who had learned to ask brave questions, strategically seek out answers individually and working together, and to already be considering how they will continue this process post-graduation.

3.3. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the modes of delivery

Department degree programs and individual courses appear to use effective and appropriately chosen models of learning delivery, including a mix of lecture, discussion, case-based learning, and experiential service-based learning. Students report a positive learning environment in which genuine intellectual curiosity and intellectual risk-taking is encouraged, where they feel comfortable bringing their lived experience into discussions and feel like their instructors are genuinely invested in their learning success and available for help. Modes of delivery and evaluation are, of course, partially dictated by the size of classes. With smaller a reduced student to faculty ratio in future, the DHS would have more flexibility to use the most effective modes for course delivery based on needs of content.

3.4. Ways the curriculum addresses the current state of the area of study

Current courses represent a very broad range of content areas within the field of health studies, but it is less clear that a broad range of skill areas are also represented. This aligns with a concern raised by a number of students. While they consistently found their courses compelling and interesting, they felt there was repetition in some skills taught and insufficient opportunity to develop some specific skills or knowledge (including advanced epidemiology, biostatistics, and data programming) to be competitive applicants or successful students in graduate programs in their field of interest. Likewise, connecting with stakeholders – such as co-op placement site supervisors, those who hire department graduates, and graduate / professional programs attended by graduates – regarding gaps in needed skills and workforce capacity may provide a valuable source of feedback for skills that could be explicitly targeted within existing courses. In some cases, existing courses may target skill development more than explicitly appears from course titles, descriptions, and syllabi, but there may be room for greater

intentionality at the program level regarding scaffolding of skills across courses – not only quantitative and qualitative research skills, but also other foundational skill domains in the field such as information literacy, health communication for different audiences, community and stakeholder engagement, quality improvement and evaluation.

In addition, concerns were raised regarding the Health Policy major, in that it does not appear to cover the full range of skills and content typically covered in a Health Policy degree program due to the limited number of departmental faculty with expertise in this area.

Similarly, the total number of classes offered by the department beyond the core courses required of all undergraduates appears to be larger than is reasonably sustainable with the existing faculty complement. This is true both in terms of the courses offered each year (which has resulted in a consistently high reliance on sessional instructors for core or required courses) and in terms of the overall range of courses officially listed by the department. The latter results in current students sharing experiences of disappointment that too many of the course titles which excited them into applying for the degree program are not offered most years, if at all). The decision-making process used by the department regarding if and when to discontinue courses — or to consider merging or otherwise substantially revising courses — appears to involve thoughtful deliberation by the curriculum committee (which is a strength) but does appear to be based on ad hoc proposals by faculty rather than a strategic, systematic process to identify degree program wide goals and prioritize teaching capacity to meet those goals. Further, the discontinuation of courses could benefit from a more proactive approach. While the actual process for discontinuing a course once the department has discerned that need appears relatively standard, it seems that currently the question of whether or not to discontinue a course only comes up for discussion when a course repeatedly has low subscription and/or no available instructor for a number of terms or even years. As a relatively new and small department that has inherited pre-existing degree programs and courses, this is not unusual, but also does not serve the goals and needs of the department moving forward – not only does this lead to considerable disappointment among students who had been expecting to take certain courses (and may have chosen the major with that in mind), but also has led to situations where some faculty members' teaching effort has been repeatedly devoted to courses that do not meet the department's expectations for minimal enrollment, resulting in further imbalances in the teaching workload experienced. Change in this area has the potential to significantly improve student, faculty, and staff experience with the programs.

3.5. Co-op and Work Integrated Learning

The review team received a slide presentation from the Arts & Science Co-op program at UofT. In Health Studies, Co-op is available with both the Major in Health Policy (under Social Sciences & Humanities admissions grouping) and the Major in Population Health (under Psychological and Health Sciences admissions grouping). While the numbers have been steadily increasing annually in Health Studies over the past 7 years (78 to 142), the numbers in Health Policy have been declining in recent years (21 in 2017, 16 in 2023). A total of 1317 students were in co-op in 2023 across 58 co-op programs at UofT. There is a common goal in DHS to have students in co-op still complete their programs within four years. While this is an attractive feature for students who wish to graduate on time, it may pose as a barrier in

the form of a stigma if a student wishes to take more time to be able to acquire co-op experience that may be longer in duration or that does not fit into their time-table. The cost of co-op also appears to be a barrier to students. Students mentioned they were supportive of more work-integrated learning opportunities that could combine classroom experiences with community engagement.

3.6. Program requirements for graduate programs

Not applicable, as no graduate programs currently offered or approved for implementation. It was not clear to the reviewers, the extent to which faculty members also engage in course instruction at the graduate level hosted by other departments.

4) Assessment of teaching and learning

4.1. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods for assessing student achievement

Assessment of student learning and achievement within individual courses uses appropriate and effective methods, especially in the upper-level courses. One reasonable concern raised by students is the inability to receive feedback on final papers for courses; without this feedback, it is difficult for them to feel confident about how well they have met the learning objectives. Although we have been informed that UofT policy allows sharing such feedback after final grades have been posted and made visible to students, we heard consistently from students, faculty, and the Chair that it is UofT policy to not provide grades or share feedback on final papers. Although it is not uncommon in large universities for there to be such discrepancies between written policy and the understanding and implementation of the policy, this may be an area in which the department could benefit from guidance from the Dean's office, including standardized language to use in course syllabi regarding this issue.

Assessment of student learning in lower-level courses largely relies on quizzes and exams. However, growing evidence indicates that these assessment approaches can exacerbate pre-existing inequities in education. These assessments may not equally evaluate the depth of understanding and skills across all student populations, given the role that other factors (e.g., impostor syndrome, disability, and unequal exposure to test-taking strategies) can have on performance above and beyond content mastery. Although reliance on quizzes and exams may appear to be the only feasible option with large class sizes, innovation in learning assessment and pedagogical research continue to expand opportunities to employ other forms of assessment. Consultation with the Centre for Teaching and Learning may be beneficial and may require additional Teaching Assistant resources.

Assessment of teaching is an area in which the department has made meaningful investments and progress, including routine peer teaching evaluations of sessional instructors, although it does not appear this is yet consistently occurring for core faculty as well. One potential area of growth is to strategically identify departmental and program goals in teaching growth and to utilize these peer evaluation processes to help move faculty towards those.

4.2. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the plans to monitor and assess programs

Although data are available on general student retention and graduation from department programs,

such data do not necessarily reflect whether program quality is sufficient to meet program objectives and to facilitate student success in achieving program learning outcomes. Similar departments in peer institutions often have access to institutional resources to provide data about employer satisfaction with co-op student performance and post-graduation employment and/or graduate/professional school admission. The co-op program currently conducts mid-term and final surveys from both students and employers evaluating satisfaction, and the program is hoping to be able to start returning such data to the departments in the coming academic year. Especially in the absence of broader alumni-specific data from the institution, engagement with community partners who commonly hire and/or admit program graduates for their feedback on current degree program quality and the performance of its graduates may be worth considering.

In addition, the DHS and UTSC would need to work with Development and Alumni Relations to obtain data on alumni. The co-op program would need to collect data not only from employers and students related to their respective levels of satisfaction, but also on the impact of the co-op experience on future career successes. Without these data, it is not possible to monitor the overall quality of the programs effectively or efficiently in DHS. Further, these data would need to be aligned and collected with respect to objectives and learning outcomes, all of which would be contained in a strategic plan specific to the DHS.

Currently, there does not appear to be equity data collected on applicants, incoming students, staff, and faculty. This would likely need to be a university wide initiative with cohort data shared with respective programs and compared across campus.

5) Admission requirements

DHS currently has unrestricted enrolment, meaning it is not subject to caps. Students may apply to the program at any point during their tenure at UTSC. The only admission requirements for the Health Policy and Population Health programs from high school is grade 12 English. In the Health Policy program, students may be admitted to the regular (non-co-op) program with grades in the mid-70s, while admission grades to the regular Population Health program are in the low-80s. Co-op admissions require higher grades in both programs. Discussed during the review was the addition of a high school math requirement to address observed issues with numerical literacy. The reviewers agree with UTSC administration that adding a math requirement from high school may run counter to other admissions priorities, such as equitable access to post-secondary education at UTSC for students from the region. Numerical literacy at the level required, especially in the Population Health program may need to be addressed through enhancing educational supports or addition of a numeracy-skills-focused course specific to population health. The latter option would require appropriate resourcing and adequate instructional capacity.

6) Resources

It was clear to the reviewers that the resources available to DHS are insufficient to meet its current operations, let alone plans for growth and expansion. Some may be addressed by the move to SAMIH, but core challenges remain in the following domains:

6.1. Faculty (Teaching and Service)

The current faculty complement is insufficient to sustain the number of courses across the four Undergraduate and two Co-op programs for 1200+ undergraduate students. The current faculty complement is 21 individuals (14 tenure-track (one with a 49% appointment in DHS), 3 teaching stream, 2 CLTA and 2 part-time faculty with 67% appointments), however, this is a gross over-estimate of the number in fact available to contribute to teaching and service in DHS. In the 2023/24 academic year, **only 14 faculty taught courses in DHS and of these, only two taught the full load expected under the unit's workload policy** (which has never been ratified). Put another way, the "on paper" full course load for the current faculty complement in 2023/24 was 85 courses but in reality, when accounting for teaching reductions and leaves, the actual load in was 40 courses. **The total number of courses offered in 2023/24 was 76**, excluding independent study and independent research courses, which includes 29 courses during each of the Fall and Winter terms, and 18 courses during the summer term.

Of the tenure track faculty, one full professor is currently on research and study leave and the other is in an administrative position in the Dean's Office and therefore does not contribute to teaching. Of the three Associate Professors, the Chair and the Associate Chair, Research have reduced teaching loads (currently also impacted by research and study leaves), and one has a course reduction due to a Canada Research Chair. All 8 Assistant Professors hired since 2018, all have pre-tenure teaching reductions, one is the Associate Chair Undergraduate with a teaching reduction, and one of these is only a 49% appointment in DHS. One Assistant Professor has a course reduction because they are responsible for the Paramedicine Program; however, a new staff person has been hired to split their time equally between supporting the Paramedicine program and the Pathways to Health Professions certificate. A combination of study, parental and other leaves means that the predicted return to a full teaching load for this category of faculty is not anticipated until 2026-2029, provided that tenure applications are successful. In addition, tenure stream faculty teaching includes one graduate course outside of DHS, due to faculty affiliations with graduate programs across the University of Toronto.

The small number of tenure-track faculty active in DHS further limits access to research opportunities for undergraduate students, a point which was noted in our meeting with the students.

Of the three teaching stream faculty, one has an administrative position in the Dean's Office, one has a one course reduction as Associate Chair, Undergraduate and the other has a one course reduction for Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence Membership. Of the CTLAs one has an administrative appointment in the Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation (VPRI) and one teaches their full load of 4 courses. Of the part-time faculty one is on indefinite leave and one has a reduced teaching load to start.

In addition to teaching, we observed that junior faculty are required to perform considerable service in the DHS, in addition to their graduate program and external service commitments. This is due to the limited number of senior faculty who are dedicated to DHS. In our view, this service burden is greater than that of junior faculty in our own units and will negatively impact faculty workload and retention.

It can be expected, from our experience, that leaves of various types, combined with teaching releases for other reasons, such as research scholarship, and recruitment into department and faculty

administrative positions directly impact teaching capacity in the DHS programs. This is further challenged when best practice dictates planned redundancy among core faculty to cover leaves for required courses. In our own units, teaching is allocated such that more than one core faculty member can teach a required course, and indeed, can cycle through them. Core courses taught by core faculty is in the best interests of the students and leads to best outcomes with respect to curricular design of programs aligned with well-thought-out curricular priorities. Further, it needs to be clear that the Chair has authority to assign teaching to address high-enrolment and core priorities.

6.2. Staffing

The DHS operates with a small and committed staff complement, but their ability to advance DHS interests, especially strategically, is limited by the fact that most of the staff serve 3 units at UTSC simultaneously, and one staff serves 6 units. Near future changes – such as retirements or promotions – can provide UTSC an opportunity to adjust the human resources for this position, hopefully to create an administrative assistant position that is dedicated to DHS. In speaking with the staff, all agreed that they would need to be dedicated to one unit to perform at their full capacity effectively. Therefore, there is inadequate staffing to support planned expansions in student programming, such as diplomas and certificates. The shared staffing model raises concerns with the planned move to a new building when DHS relocates to SAMIH. We recommend that by the time of the move, core staff, especially an Assistant Chair/Director Administration, Operations and Strategic Planning, be allocated to the unit.

6.3. Library

The reviewers had the opportunity to tour the library and meet with the Chief Librarian. We have no concerns about library infrastructure, especially online resources, which are world-leading at the University of Toronto. Students and faculty have access to a research librarian with expertise in health. The library staff contribute to training in courses, online, and individually for strategies, evidence synthesis, and scoping reviews. One concern raised was the adequacy and access to the dedicated health librarian in the new facility of SAMIH, with a recommendation that library resources be included in the planning of the facility to facilitate interactions with faculty and students in DHS.

6.4. Space

DHS has outgrown its current space allocation. As a unit with aspirations to be research intensive, the unit houses its current faculty and staff complement, has access to wet-laboratory space for the environmental health faculty that need it (we did not tour these facilities), but virtually no dry-laboratory research space. The one office for postdoctoral fellows does not align with the way that research teams operate. What is needed is cross-rank/seniority shared dry-lab space where all highly qualified research personnel in a research group can coalesce around research activities, including quantitative and qualitative data analysis. One faculty member, as an example, has a research team of 17, but is forced to work virtually, despite team members' willingness to commute to meet and work in person. Further, given the structure at University of Toronto of Graduate programs, the nexus of graduate student activities gravitates to the St. George or downtown campus. The lack of access to research space limits opportunities for undergraduate students at UTSC to be exposed to and participate in research. It was implied that the new building for SAMIH will accommodate both faculty growth and

dry-lab research space. The plans have not been adequately communicated to DHS staff and faculty and the planned move is therefore causing some anxiety in the unit. More inclusive discussions over research and office space planning is warranted.

6.5. Resources for graduate programs

Not applicable, as no graduate programs currently offered or approved for implementation.

6.6. Quality and other Indicators

Due to high service duties, the career progression of junior faculty members is jeopardized if their scholarship is not protected. Future hires across the ranks, including senior ranks who can assume larger workloads including mentorship responsibilities, can mitigate this situation and help ensure junior faculty are successfully promoted.

According to the Self-Study report (3.6.2), last year the DHS admitted students with an average High School GPA of 88%, and 85% of students graduate within the expected time frame. The DHS provided a list of other programs across the country but did not provide a comparison across common metrics. (Later in the report, the reviewers provide a comparison with SFU and UWaterloo).

With respect to the Engagement Indicator on the NSSE, the Self-Study report shows that the UTSC indicators in 2014, 2017 and 2020 were either on par or higher than all of UofT, with the exception of “learning strategies” in 2020. However, it is not known if the DHS indicators are represented in the UTSC indicators.

FACULTY/RESEARCH

Of the 13.5 tenure-track faculty in DHS, one has an administrative appointment in the Dean’s office, one is department Chair, and a CLTA runs a research institute. Eight are Assistant Professors, and one is a 49% appointment in the unit.

The small faculty complement and the recent creation of the unit makes it difficult to compare to other larger, more established equivalents in other institutions. The unit provided some data on rankings for the University of Toronto as a whole, which is not an appropriate comparator. Therefore, our comments are restricted to the unit.

We were impressed by the quality of the recent hires in the unit. The majority hold PhD degrees from internationally recognized institutions and some have health/social workforce experience, thereby bringing sound practical knowledge and community partnership strengths to the unit. Several faculty members have high profile awards for their scholarship, such as a Canada Research Chair, and many have internal awards. Internal awards are an appropriate mechanism to build the profile of early-career researchers and educators towards nationally significant awards, such as the Royal Society College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists or 3M Teaching Awards. The funding and scholarly profile of faculty is in keeping with expectations in health domains, with respect to total funding received and participation in Tri-Agency funding. Nevertheless, the funding success and level is uneven among faculty, even accounting for discipline, suggesting greater support is required for pre- and post- grant support,

including research facilitation. While supports may be sufficient to sustain the current faculty and funding level, they will need to be strengthened if the unit is able to grow to meet its full potential. We provide some comparator data on research supports below.

Strengthening research relationships for faculty and graduate students, and indicating the interdisciplinary breadth of faculty, is the diversity of graduate appointment of DHS faculty, totaling 12 graduate unit cross appointments. The greatest number of faculty are cross appointed with the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and Sociology. While this diversity indicates interdisciplinarity, it may also be indicative of a lack of consolidation around core research thematic areas. There is a danger in appointing “n’s of 1” and future hiring should be in accordance with a well-thought out strategic research plan that builds strengths around core health and social challenges. The unit is too small to address all the sub-topics within its 4 broadly specified areas: (1) Research in Life Course and the Life Cycle; (2) Social Hierarchies and Marginality; (3) Cultures of Health and Illness; and (4) Environment and Health. We recommend increased focus in areas of obvious emergent strength and regional significance, such as health equity, disability studies, Indigenous health and environmental health.

The interdisciplinary Centre for Global Disability Studies has the potential to catalyze an area of unique research and training (undergraduate and graduate) strength. DHS is well positioned with interdisciplinary hires in the topic area, of great significance, regionally, nationally and internationally. The unit may wish to consider additional hires to strengthen this domain of health/social challenge, and to make the unit distinctive and competitive.

Teaching faculty have a high degree of content expertise and are fully engaged with research and enhanced skills development in teaching and learning.

Finally, the creation of SAMIH and the inclusion of DHS has the potential to enhance the profile and impact of research in DHS through increased linkages with health care practitioners and community partners.

RELATIONSHIPS

The morale of the faculty, students and staff we met with appeared reasonable, with caveats for the size of the unit relative to expectations across teaching, service, and research. There was strong support for the current Chair, and a sense that DHS was moving in the right direction with respect to work culture and relationships, especially among the more recent hires. Morale is threatened by uncertainty over the move to SAMIH, combined with high service burden for junior faculty and the general under-resourcing of staff and financial autonomy discussed above.

There is a well-organized mentorship program for incoming faculty, and faculty feel well supported by colleagues and staff in navigating teaching and research expectations. Several faculty mentioned appreciating strongly benefiting from departmental support to engage in the “Faculty Success Program” from NCFDD.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

In light of the uncertainty in the UTSC budgeting and faculty allocation model, we recognize that some of our recommendations with respect to rationalization of the curricular offerings and programs may

have fiscal implications, depending on the institutional budget model. It was not possible for the review team to assess the financial risks to DHS that derive from our recommendations.

It will be important for UTSC leadership (under the incoming Vice Principal (Academic) and Dean) to meet regularly with the department chair, and the administrative / financial manager for the department to ensure a shared understanding of the potential budget impacts to DHS as well as more broadly to UTSC when considering whether, when, and how to implement changes to address needs identified in this review.

GOVERNANCE

The DHS is relatively streamlined with respect to governance, with a Chair and two Associate Chairs. The Chair coordinates the faculty evaluation process across 12 graduate units at the University of Toronto. However, a governance structure for committee work conducive to strategic thinking across research and teaching priorities seems nascent. For example, the workload policy was created prior to departmentalization and has never been ratified, leading to disparities across faculty in teaching workloads. At present, students are not formally included in DHS committees, and the reviewers believe this is a missed opportunity to engage students who are future alumni and leaders. As the department matures, thought should be given to the appropriate governance mechanisms that distribute the burden between strategy development and operational decision making. Clarity in governance structure would be aided by clear terms of reference and membership criteria for all committees and a more equitable distribution of service burden.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING CHALLENGES

VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY

The DHS would benefit from a strategic research and academic plan with a clear vision and mission that then motivates its educational programs, research clusters and associated faculty hiring. The strategic plan should be refreshed at least every 5 years and consider institutional strategic plans. Students and external partners, especially community partners in the region, should be consulted in the development of the strategic plan.

ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Leadership in DHS do not have training in advancement or direct access to advancement professionals. This is a missed opportunity as health research and education, focused on needs of underserved populations and relevant health/social issues within communities is attractive to philanthropists. In our units, some of us have dedicated advancement staff and work closely with the health authority/health charity aligned professionals. Philanthropy provides the opportunity to expand faculty complement through industrial chairs, endowed chairs (approximately \$4-6 Million endowment required per Chair), student scholarships and undergraduate research awards, and endowments to support operations of research centres. The latter requires a cluster of faculty in core areas of strength and need. All aspects of the DHS's programming could benefit from philanthropy, including co-op placements, e.g., funds could be raised to support not-for-profit organizations to hire students. Finally, advancement strategy is

closely aligned with alumni engagement, which, in a new unit, builds from strong engagement with students while enrolled that translates to an ongoing relationship and connection.

COMPARATORS

Similar to the comments from the 2016 review, currently the department is not ready to be compared to international programs. Therefore, we offer a comparison to our own units, in Canada, particularly as they relate to adequate resourcing.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES (FHS)

FHS was created in 2004, and therefore exemplifies what a new non-departmentalized, interdisciplinary unit in health sciences can become after 20 years of development, when appropriately resourced. The vision of FHS has been the integration of biological and social determinants of health and wellness and evidentiary practices to understand health from a life-course perspective. FHS's mission is both consistent with, and supportive of, recent efforts in Canada to strengthen the public health system. FHS activities and resourcing priorities are informed by its Research and Academic Strategic Plans. The FHS has a governing constitution that sets out all governance and decision-making processes, committee and reporting structures, and Terms of Reference for standing committees, with delegation authority to task-specific, time-limited ad hoc specialist committees, for example for strategically informed educational stream curricular reforms.

Since 2008, FHS has been housed in a purpose-built building of 54,239 square feet, encompassing, 25,381 sq feet of faculty and staff offices and dry lab research space, 22,378 sq feet of wet-laboratory and 6,480 sq feet of teaching lab. The building also houses a lecture theatre, meeting rooms, classrooms and a large student commons and lounge with associated programming to enhance the student experience. Faculty additionally have research and laboratory space in a variety of BC's health research institutes partnered with the health authorities and the University of British Columbia, as well as two (2) research centres housed on SFU's downtown Vancouver campus.

The faculty has 63 faculty members across ranks and appointment types equivalent to those in DHS. Of these, 50 have research-focused positions (>40% workload) and 13 have teaching or professional practice focused positions. Of the 50 research-focused position, 22 are at the rank of Professor, 12 Associate Professor, 9 Assistant Professor (Tenure-Track), 3 Assistant Professor (Grant-Tenure), 2 Limited Term Professors, and 2 University Research Associates. Indicators of quality include awards of: 3 Canada Research Chairs (with 2 further nominations pending), 1 CIHR Applied Public Health Chair in Gender and Sex in Healthy Cities, 6 Endowed Research Chairs, 2 Order of Canada recipients, 3 Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada, 7 Fellows of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, 3 Members of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists, 18 faculty who are or who have been Michael Smith Health Research BC Scholars, 5 SFU Distinguished Professors, and the Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute for Sex and Gender. FHS has the highest proportion of faculty (92.3%) who hold peer-reviewed research grants and the highest amount of research funding per tenure-track faculty member of any unit in SFU. External funding has ranged over the past five years between 18 and 25.8 Million CAD, primarily from the Tri-Councils, and 26.6 Million awarded from the US National Institutes

for Health Research. There is a commitment to knowledge mobilization and partnered-research with policy/systems impact.

Interdisciplinary educational programming within FHS employs a “cell-to-society” motif. FHS trained 1,729 undergraduate students in 2023 across 2 undergraduate degree programs, with 3 streams - a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Science - Life Sciences stream and a Bachelor of Science - Population Health and Data stream. The faculty trained 141 graduate students in 2023, across a Masters in Public Health (MPH) program as well as the research graduate programs - MSc and PhD. There were 172 Co-op placements and 35 MPH practicum placements in 2023.

The Faculty of Health Sciences Research Strategic Plan (currently being updated) centres three core themes—social inequities, Indigenous health, and global health, with big data added—across seven Research Challenge Areas: (a) developmental trajectories, (b) diseases, both (i) infectious and (ii) chronic, (c) transformative health systems and health policy, (d) mental health and substance use, (e) planetary health, and (f) health science and public health education. In support of the Challenge Areas, FHS has four interdisciplinary research centres—the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA), the Children’s Health Policy Centre (CHPC), the SFU Interdisciplinary Research Centre for HIV (SIRCH), and the Centre for Collaborative Action on Indigenous Health Governance.

In sum, FHS faculty complement is more than 300% larger than DHS, while serving only 150% more undergraduate students and has representation across academic ranks. It has dedicated research and teaching space and is supported by a dedicated staff of 26 across administration and strategic planning; pre- and post- research services (grants facilitation and finance); facilities/operations and IT services; educational programming, advising, experience and co-op; communications; and advancement and building alumni relations.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO, SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES, FACULTY OF HEALTH

The Faculty of Health consists of three units: School of Public Health Sciences (SPHS), Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences, and the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. The faculty has 84 faculty members, 50 staff members, 2550 undergraduate students and 522 graduate students.

The SPHS can serve as an analogy for the DHS. The School has a total of nine undergraduate programs, three graduate programs, and three course-based or professional masters programs. The SPHS currently has a total of 1170 undergraduate students (890 in Health Sciences, 280 in Public Health), and 416 graduate students. Graduate programs include the following Masters in the following: Health Evaluation, Health Informatics, Public Health; and PhD in the following: Aging, Health and Wellbeing, Public Health Sciences, along with combined degrees such as Public Health with Mechanical and Mechantronics Engineering, and Public Health and Water. All of our undergraduate programs have co-op streams, and our graduate programs also have work-integrated learning options that function like co-op.

The School Director is equivalent to the Department Chairs and her leadership team consists of three associate directors (undergraduate program, professional graduate programs, and research graduate

programs). The SPHS has a complement of 38 faculty members, not including those are adjunct/retired but still continuing in research scholarship and graduate student supervision: 5 permanent in teaching stream; 5 assistant tenure-track; 11 associate tenured of which 2 have CRC, 1 is University Research Chair, 1 is CIHR Applied Public Health Chair, and 1 is Schlegel Research Chair; 17 tenured full profs, of which one is School Director, one is Dean and one is President (51%). Also, of the full profs, 2 are 49% and 1 is 51% jointly appointed. The faculty has 23 regular research staff contingent, and the School has three “research assistant professors” funded through researchers’ account, these positions do not exist elsewhere. In addition to academic advisors, the School has staff for recruitment, human resources, and graduate and undergraduate recruitment.

C. Recommendations

*Please make **at least three recommendations** for specific steps to be taken that will lead to the continuous improvement of each academic program/unit listed in the Terms of Reference, distinguishing between those the program/unit can itself take and those that require external action.*

Please clarify when a recommendation applies to more than one program/unit.

*Please endeavour to distinguish between observations or suggestions (which can be included in “Findings”) and formal recommendations (which should be included here). **The Dean and unit/program will be required to provide a public response to every recommendation listed in this section.***

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The DHS has great potential to be a national leader in interdisciplinary health sciences education and to contribute its expertise across science, social science, and humanities domains to the development of the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH). The DHS has the potential to meet student demand for health-relevant undergraduate programming. Its research priorities align with local and global challenges, and DHS is poised to make significant contributions to Canadian challenges of an aging population, health equity, including ableism, Indigenous health, and structural and institutional racism in the health and social sectors.

Several overarching recommendations emerged across the external review process, including some which could be implemented directly by DHS and some which would require UTSC resources and/or action. **Our key recommendation is to strengthen resourcing for DHS to enable it to fulfill its potential.** The two solutions to the current lack of faculty is to: (1) reduce the number of programs and core courses, or (2) increase faculty complement, preferably hiring across ranks. Since the former solution does not meet the growth potential for health programming at UTSC, the latter is the preferred recommendation. Strategic thought needs to be given to the ratio of teaching to tenure-stream faculty, balancing research and teaching capacity and foci in the unit. Specifically,

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO – SCARBOROUGH SHOULD STRONGLY CONSIDER TO:

1. Commit to at least doubling the current faculty complement in the coming five years, balanced across rank and tenure-track/teaching streams, with additional faculty hires as needed to compensate for faculty in administrative leadership roles.
2. Provide equitable access to research space for “dry lab” researchers and their substantial research teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students. These space requirements may be met in the planned SAMIH, however, more consultation should be undertaken with DHS faculty and temporary space should be provided to address current needs.
3. Build consistent discretionary funding into the department budget for the chair to use for evolving departmental priorities, such as undergraduate research assistantships, etc.
4. Increase staff positions dedicated to DHS by at least 2.5 FTE, to allow adequate departmental capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement.
5. Prospectively collect equity-related data and provide to all departments (including DHS) in a de-identified manner that allows monitoring and intervention for barriers to access and success within departmental programs.
6. Provide training for DHS leadership in advancement and access to advancement professionals at UofT to develop and implement an integrated alumni relations and advancement strategy for DHS.
7. Provide DHS leadership with regular meetings with UTSC leadership to transparently discuss budget and enrolment planning.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIETY SHOULD STRONGLY CONSIDER TO:

1. Develop a strategic plan, mission, and values statement to use in making decisions regarding program and course offerings, faculty hiring, research cluster strengthening, departmental policies, etc.
2. Develop and ratify a teaching equity policy that considers an equitable balance of core and elective courses, class size, and reasons for teaching release. For example, is post-tenure teaching release required in addition to study leave on promotion, should teaching faculty receive teaching release, or instead be provided with semesters of no teaching at a set frequency, without a reduction in load?
3. Combine the Population Health and Health Policy programs into a single program with both HBA and HBS degree options.
4. Right-size course offerings, based on programmatic strategic goals, to those which can be consistently taught by core faculty, inclusive of need for leaves and prioritize required courses over under-enrolled and/or elective courses in faculty teaching loads.
5. Carefully consider the development of new programs considering current workload and capacity to deliver. We recommend consolidation at this point in time, rather than expansion.
6. Align research priorities with a strategic plan, mission, and values statement to strengthen

interdisciplinary priority clusters and to develop areas of uniqueness, for which DHS will become known. Consolidate first around areas of strength with recruitment and then build out new research clusters.

7. Develop and maintain stronger relationships with community partners and alumni, to enhance experiential learning opportunities and access to program outcome data.

Terms of Reference (appended for reference)

Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference are intended to establish the parameters of the cyclical review process and provide the framework of the review report.

Issues that are addressed through existing, specific University procedures are considered **out of scope** for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns). **Any such issues raised at any point during a review process** (self-study, site visit, review report) **must immediately be brought to the attention of the commissioning officer and routed through appropriate University channels for resolution.**

Program(s) under review:	Health Humanities: Min (Arts) Health Studies – Health Policy, BA: Maj and Co-op Health Studies – Population Health, B.Sc.: Maj and Co-op Health Studies: Min (Arts) (suspended)
Division/unit under review	Department of Health and Society
Commissioning Officer:	Professor William A. Gough, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean
Date of scheduled review:	<i>Wednesday, March 20, 2024 and Thursday, March 21, 2024</i>

Template Instructions:

These terms of reference have been designed to be customized to accommodate Provostial reviews of divisions (and the programs they offer) as well as Decanal Reviews of units and their programs.

Reviewers are asked to comment explicitly upon the following:

1 Program(s)

The quality of each academic program and the learning environment of the students in each program must be addressed explicitly in the self-study and the external reviewers' report.

For **each** discrete program that is part of the review as defined in the Terms of Reference, please consider and comment on the following:

1.1 Program objectives and key features

- a) Consistency of the program's objectives with the institution's [mission](#) and U of T's/the division's/unit's [academic plans](#), [priorities](#) and commitments, including consistency with any implementation plans developed following a previous review
- b) Evidence that the following have been substantially considered in the context of the program and its associated resources:
 1. [Universal design principles](#) and/or the potential need to provide mental or physical disability-related accommodations, reflecting the University's [Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities](#)
 2. Support for student well-being and sense of community in the learning and teaching environment, reflecting the work of the [Expert Panel on Undergraduate Student Educational Experience](#) and the commitment to establishing a Culture of Caring and Excellence as recommended by the [Presidential and Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health](#)
 3. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Indigenous students; for integrating Indigenous content into the curriculum in consultation with Indigenous curriculum developers; and for addressing any discipline-specific calls to action, reflecting the commitments made in [Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
 4. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Black students; for promoting intersectional Black flourishing, fostering inclusive excellence and enabling mutuality in teaching and learning, reflecting the commitments made in the [Scarborough Charter](#) and consistent with the recommendations of the [Anti-Black Racism Task Force Final Report](#)
 5. Opportunities for fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive teaching and learning environment, reflecting the values articulated in existing institutional

documents such as the [*Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence*](#), the [*Antisemitism Working Group Final Report*](#), the aforementioned reports, and future institutional reports related to equity, diversity and inclusion

- c) (Where appropriate) Unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, significant high impact practices
- d) Initiatives taken to enhance the quality of the program and the associated learning and teaching environment.

1.2 Program requirements

- 2. Appropriateness of the program's structure and the requirements to meet its objectives and program-level learning outcomes, including the structure and requirements of any identified streams (undergraduate), fields or concentrations (graduate)
- 3. Appropriateness of the program's structure, requirements and program-level learning outcomes in meeting [the institution's applicable undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations](#)
- 4. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the mode(s) of delivery (i.e., means or medium used in delivering a program; e.g., lecture format, distance, online, synchronous/asynchronous, problem-based, compressed part-time, flex-time, multi-campus, inter-institutional collaboration or other non-standard forms of delivery) to facilitate students' successful completion of the program-level learning outcomes
- 5. Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study and is appropriate for the level of the program

1.3 Program requirements for graduate programs only

- a) Clear rationale for program length that ensures that students can complete the program-level learning outcomes and requirements within the time required
- b) Evidence that each graduate student in the program is required to take all of the course requirements from among graduate-level courses; evidence of sufficient graduate-level courses that students will be able to meet this requirement
- c) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion

1.4 Assessment of teaching and learning

- a) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods for assessing student achievement of the program-level learning outcomes and degree level expectations
- b) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the plans to monitor and assess:

1. The overall quality of the program
2. Whether the program is achieving in practice its proposed objectives
3. Whether its students are achieving the program-level learning outcomes
4. How the resulting information will be documented and subsequently used to inform continuous program improvement

1.5 Admission requirements

- a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements given the program's objectives and program-level learning outcomes
- b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if applicable, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, e.g., minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, and how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience.

1.6 Resources

In making assessments related to resources here and in 1.7, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation.

Given the program's class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

- a) Participation of a sufficient number and quality of core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in and achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment
- b) If applicable, discussion/explanation of the role and approximate percentage of adjunct and sessional faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program and the associated plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and quality of the student experience (see [QAF Guidance](#))
- c) If required, provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities
- d) Adequacy of the administrative unit's utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources
- e) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship and research activities produced by students, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access

1.7 Resources for graduate programs only

In making assessments related to resources here and in 1.6, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation.

Given the program's class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

- a) Evidence that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation, and foster an appropriate intellectual climate
- b) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students
- c) Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, in light of qualifications and appointment status of the faculty.

1.8 Quality and other indicators

- a) Evidence of the quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, funding, honours, awards, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the program and commitment to student mentoring)
 - 1. The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching
- b) Any other evidence that the program and faculty will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.
- c) Quality indicators related to students (e.g., grade level for admission; applications and registrations; attrition/retention rates; times-to-completion; final year academic achievement; graduation rates; scholarly output; success rates in provincial and national scholarships; competitions; academic awards; student in-course reports on teaching; and commitment to professional and transferable skills)
- d) Quality indicators related to program graduates (e.g., rates of graduation; employment six months and two years after graduation; postgraduate study; “skills match”; and alumni reports on program quality when available and when permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Auditors will be instructed that these items may not be available and applicable to all programs.)
- e) Any additional indicators of quality identified by the division or academic unit, including but not limited to data to support the assessment of progress towards fulfilling the plans, priorities and commitments identified in 1.1.a and 1.1.b
- f) How the program compares to the best in its field among peer institutions in Canada, North America and internationally, including areas of strength and opportunities

2 Faculty/Research

- Scope, quality and relevance of faculty research activities.
- Appropriateness of the level of activity relative to national and international comparators.
- Appropriateness of research activities for the undergraduate and graduate students in the Department.
- Faculty complement plan.
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the academic unit's use of existing human resources.
In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation

3 Relationships

- Strength of the morale of faculty, students and staff.
- Scope and nature of relationships with cognate Faculties, academic departments and units.
- Extent to which the department has developed or sustained fruitful partnerships with other universities and organizations in order to foster research, creative professional activities and to deliver teaching programs.
- Scope and nature of the department relationship with external government, academic and professional organizations.
- Social impact of the department in terms of outreach and impact locally and nationally.

4 Organizational and Financial Structure

- The appropriateness and effectiveness of the department's organizational and financial structure
- The appropriateness with which resource allocation, including space and infrastructure support, has been managed. *In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation*
- Opportunities for new revenue generation.

5 Long-Range Planning Challenges

- Consistency with the University's academic plan.
- Appropriateness of:
 - Complement plan, including balance of tenure-stream and non-tenure stream faculty
 - Enrolment strategy
 - Student financial aid
 - Development/fundraising initiatives
 - Management and leadership.

6 International Comparators

Assessment of the department and the program(s) under review relative to the best in Canada/North America and internationally, including areas of strength and opportunities.



November 25, 2024

Professor Karin Ruhlandt
Vice-Principal, Academic and Dean
University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Ruhlandt:

Thank you for forwarding the report of the March 2024 external review of the Department of Health and Society. The following programs were reviewed: Health Studies – Health Policy (HBA): Major and Major Co-op; Health Studies – Population Health (HBSc): Major and Major Co-op; Health Humanities Minor (Arts); Health Studies Minor (Arts).

As indicated in our *Statement of Institutional Purpose*, the University of Toronto is committed “to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate and professional programs of excellent quality.” This quality is assessed through the periodic appraisal of programs and units, which considers how our research scholarship and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and assesses the alignment of our programs with established degree-level expectations. The University views the reports and recommendations made by external reviewers as opportunities to celebrate successes and identify areas for quality improvement.

The reviewers praised the department’s “unique and highly valuable blend of courses” that approach health from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and noted that “students graduate with a more holistic view of health and society.” They commended the opportunities for experiential learning in the Department’s programs, and observed that students praised the quality of instruction and the creation of safe learning environments in which they can bring their diverse lived experience to discussions of complex health and social issues. They highlighted the department’s strengths in adopting universal design principles and proactive disability-related accommodations, particularly in upper-year courses. They applauded the department’s exceptional new faculty hiring decisions, and noted the content expertise and full engagement with research and skills development in teaching and learning among teaching faculty. Finally, the reviewers highlighted the potential for inclusion in the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health to enhance the Department’s research profile and impact.

I am writing at this time:

1. to request your administrative response to this report, which should include a plan for implementing the recommendations; these plans should be captured in the enclosed table;

2. to request your feedback on the review summary component of the draft *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan*; and
3. to outline the next steps in the process.

1. Request for Administrative Response and Implementation Plan:

In your **Administrative Response**, please address the following areas raised by the reviewers and their impact on the academic programs, *along with any additional areas you would like to prioritize*.

For each area you address, please provide an **Implementation Plan** that identifies actions to be accomplished in the immediate (six months), medium (one to two years) and longer (three to five years) terms, and who (Program Director, Chair, Dean) will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy, or governance; and any resources—financial and otherwise—that will be provided, including who will provide them.

- The reviewers made recommendations related to the configuration and consolidation of the Department’s program offerings, commenting in general that DHS should carefully consider whether new program development is appropriate in light of current workload and capacity to deliver; they recommended strategic consideration of future directions for the Population Health and Health Policy programs, including potential integration.
- The reviewers observed that the overall number of DHS courses “appears larger than is reasonably sustainable with the existing faculty complement” and highlighted student concerns that some desirable courses are not offered most years; they recommended systematizing and streamlining processes for revising or discontinuing courses, and aligning the Department’s course offerings with strategic goals and teaching capacity.
- The reviewers noted that, although health studies course offerings cover a broad range of content areas, it is less clear that they also cover a broad array of skill areas. They suggested that DHS take a more intentional approach to the scaffolding of skills across courses, including quantitative and qualitative research skills as well as other foundational skill domains in the field.
- The reviewers raised several concerns regarding the size of the DHS faculty complement as it relates to program sustainability and departmental goals. They recommended prioritizing an expansion of the faculty complement when opportunities permit, balanced across rank and tenure/teaching streams, “to address the high student to core faculty ratio, to refine programming and the expansion of experiential opportunities, and to strengthen clusters of faculty in areas of core research strength.”
- The reviewers observed that faculty leaves and teaching releases can have an impact on the Department’s teaching capacity; they recommended the development of mechanisms to ensure that core and elective courses, class sizes, and teaching releases are equitably balanced for faculty.
- The reviewers raised concerns regarding UTSC’s shared staffing model, commenting that it limits capacity to support planned expansions in student programs and to leverage

opportunities arising from DHS involvement in SAMIH. They recommended exploring ways to “allow adequate departmental capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement.”

- The reviewers recommended that equitable access to research space be provided for dry lab researchers and their teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students. They further recommended additional consultation with faculty and the allocation of temporary space to meet current needs in advance of the planned move to SAMIH.
- The reviewers noted student, staff, and faculty desire for additional opportunities for community building and support; suggestions included a departmental orientation, social activities for DHS faculty and staff, and support activities and resources during stressful times.
- The reviewers recommended that DHS create a strategic research and academic plan, aligned with institutional strategy and goals; they noted that the plan should include a clear vision and mission to define the Department's academic priorities and commitments, guiding future hiring decisions and the establishment of research clusters.
- The reviewers observed that UTSC has a number of programs and initiatives to support Indigenous students, but noted that it was not clear how much DHS students can access them; they recommended close attention to the recruitment, retention, and success rates of Indigenous students, and exploring whether Indigenous students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship.

Please prepare this response in consultation with the unit under review. As part of this consultation, please request a brief administrative response from the unit that focuses on items within their control. Please reflect this consultation and respond to the key elements of the unit's response in your response.

Finally, please confirm the **date of the next review** and your plans for **monitoring the implementation of recommendations** until then. I will ask you to provide a brief report to me midway between the 2023-24 review and the year of the next site visit.

2. Draft of Final Assessment Report (including Review Summary)

In Winter 2025, my office will provide a draft version of the *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (FAR/IP)*, which will include a summary of the review of Department of Health and Society and its programs. At that time, we will request your feedback regarding tone or accuracy of the summary component, and your response to any information that is requested in the comments. This public-facing document becomes part of the governance record.

3. Next Steps

Reviews of academic programs and units are presented to University governance as a matter of University policy. Under the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP), the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs prepares a report on all program and unit reviews and submits these periodically to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P).

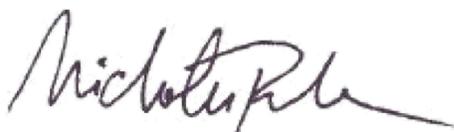
The review of the Department of Health and Society and its programs will be considered by AP&P at its meeting on **April 10, 2025**. **Please plan to attend this meeting and ensure that the unit leadership also attends.** Your presence is important and will allow you to respond to any questions the committee may have regarding the report, and your administrative response and implementation plan. An overview of what happens at AP&P is [available on our website](#).

I would appreciate receiving your completed administrative response and plan for implementing recommendations, as well as a copy of the unit's response, and any comments on the draft FAR/IP by **Thursday, March 6, 2025**. This will allow my office sufficient time to prepare materials for the AP&P meeting.

The review summary and the Dean's administrative response are the two key components of the FAR/IP, which will be finalized after the AP&P meeting and distributed to you, the unit lead(s), the Governing Council secretariat, and the Quality Council, and posted on our [website](#), as required by the UTQAP.

Please feel free to contact me or David Lock, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

cc.

Katherine Larson, Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs, UTSC
Kevin Mak, Academic Programs Officer, UTSC
Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance
David Lock, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist
Alexandra Varela, Coordinator, Academic Programs

March 11, 2025

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Division of the Vice-President & Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Health and Society, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for your letter of November 25, 2024, requesting my administrative response to the March 2024 external review of the Department of Health and Society. I want to extend my gratitude to the review team—Tania Bubela, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University; Michelle M. Garrison, Professor, Department of Public Health, Purdue University; and Lili Liu, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health, University of Waterloo—for their consultation with the Department during the site visit from March 20-21, 2024, and for their report, which was finalized on June 18, 2024, and shared with the Department.

We deeply appreciate the reviewers' assessment of the Department's course offerings that examine health from multiple perspectives, as well as their commendation of the Department's commitment to inclusive pedagogies, with the goal of enabling students to share their lived experiences in safe and holistic learning environments. In addition to praising the Department's programs and the opportunities for experiential learning offered to students, the reviewers also commended the teaching faculty's content expertise and engagement with research and skills development in teaching and learning.

The report from the review team identifies a number of areas for enhancement and development, including strategically considering the future directions of the Population Health and Health Policy programs; systematizing and streamlining processes for revising or discontinuing courses; taking a more intentional approach to the scaffolding of skills across courses; prioritizing an expansion of the faculty complement when opportunities permit; offering additional opportunities for community building and support for students, staff, and faculty; and creating a strategic research and academic plan aligned with institutional strategy and goals. With this letter, I have included a table summarizing the responses to the specific recommendations of the reviewers and anticipated timelines for implementation, where appropriate.

Once again, I thank the review team for their insightful and valuable review of the Department and its programs. I look forward to supporting the Department in implementing the recommendations of this report. The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Health and Society. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared in **Fall 2028**. The next external review of the Department will take place **no later than the 2031-32 academic year**.

Sincerely,



Professor Karin Ruhlandt
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

2023-24 UTQAP Review of UTSC Department of Health & Society- Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers made recommendations related to the configuration and consolidation of the Department's program offerings, commenting in general that DHS should carefully consider whether new program development is appropriate in light of current workload and capacity to deliver; they recommended strategic consideration of future directions for the Population Health and Health Policy programs, including potential integration.	1	"Carefully consider the development of new programs considering current workload and capacity to deliver. We recommend consolidation at this point in time, rather than expansion."	There is a strong desire to maintain two programs given that the two fields (Health Policy BA and Population Health BSc) best reflect the interdisciplinary nature of our unit, the diversity of student interests, and our future strategic plans. The Department of Health and Society also remains committed to offering these two programs instead of consolidating because each program plays a pivotal role in preparing graduates to meet the different challenges of healthcare in today's landscape. The BA program provides foundation in health policy and social determinants of health while the BSc program offers training in body systems and scientific inquiry. As we look towards SAMIH (Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health), these programs as they currently stand will attract diverse and engaged students with, the goal of continuing to grow interdisciplinary health education and training. Short term and ongoing:	My office appreciates the department's desire to maintain its two existing programs in Population Health and Health Policy as-is. At UTSC, we are keen on pursuing interdisciplinarity, recognizing our strengths in both arts and sciences in existing programs. My team and I will continue to work with the department to address issues around current workload in relation to student enrolment. We will also partner with the department to plan future program offerings in ways that strengthen DHS while also situating the department as a vital part of cross-disciplinary conversations related to the health sciences at UTSC as SAMIH is established.

			<p>We appreciate the reviewers' concerns regarding our current workload and capacity to deliver, these concerns are valid given our faculty complement and student numbers. We aim to work with the Dean's Office in the short term to address those concerns while delivering high quality programs.</p> <p>In terms of program quality enhancement, we have started the process of continually reviewing the curriculum of each program with an eye to market trends, demands, and student needs. Under leadership of our chair and curriculum committee, we are carefully working to find ways to honor the academic integrity of each program while enhancing enrolments.</p>	
	2	<p>"The Specialist program proposed by the department is one way the department could take advantage of existing required courses and allow students to choose from clusters of electives that represent the fundamental domains of health studies. A unified Major program could potentially use the same general approach, with strong consideration given to limiting to those cluster domains from which the department has multiple faculty able to teach."</p>	<p>Medium to long term:</p> <p>With the support of the Dean's Office, we are considering offering a Specialist Program in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences – an idea that has been under development within DHS for over two years and is supported by the HESA report. Given that we have a substantial proposal already written that leverages the department's existing strengths and courses, we believe there is real potential to foster collaboration with other units and program areas on campus, including Biological Sciences, Psychology, Neuroscience, Anthropology, Sociology, and Linguistics/Psycholinguistics, through relevant upper-level courses. The program features a foundational first- and second-year core curriculum, after which students can focus on specific clusters in their third year to develop a specialized area of expertise.</p>	<p>I appreciate the department's efforts and creativity in envisioning and proposing a new Health Sciences Specialist that will promote interdisciplinary collaboration with our other academic units in the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences.</p> <p>With the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH) expected to serve as a hub for education in the health sciences, new program development is something that my office and I will pursue strategically and collaboratively with DHS and other stakeholders both within and beyond UTSC. The HESA working group has been reactivated in 2024-25 under the leadership of Associate Dean Suzanne Sicchia, and this table will offer crucial support for the development of this, and related, programs in collaboration with DHS and other units.</p>

			<p>While clustering is possible within the credit constraints of a major program (7–9 credits), it is more effectively implemented in a Specialist program (12-16 credits). This approach also aligns with ongoing discussions around expanding health science-based programming across campus.</p>	
3		<p>“Combine the Population Health and Health Policy programs into a single program with both HBA and HBSc degree options.”</p>	<p>The Department has carefully considered this suggestion and has decided to retain the two existing major programs in order to provide students with two Major options. In particular, we believe it is important to maintain the existing integrity of our BSc in light of provincial mandates. And in 2023-24, we made changes to strengthen the curriculum of each program to enhance their distinctiveness. We enhanced the science offerings in our BSc major giving it greater focus in population health and differentiated the focus of our BA with greater focus on health policy.</p> <p>The recommendation to consolidate or combine the majors likely stemmed from a naming convention where both are listed under the "Health Studies" umbrella (e.g., Health Studies – Health Policy and Health Studies – Population Health). However, "Health Studies" is not a formal parent program with defined streams, which has led to confusion and misrepresentation of our programs' structure. This naming convention is a remnant from the time when Health Studies was part of Anthropology and was unfortunately presented in an outdated way in online materials at the time of the review. After our review, we received permission and have been able to make some of our requests to remove the “Health Studies” on online materials.</p>	<p>I am proud of the different pathways and program pairings students can pursue with the various Major programs offered by the different UTSC departments, including DHS. I support DHS’s decision to maintain the two existing programs in Population Health and Health Policy, at least in the short term. This structure also reflects the ways in which many of our students combine programs at UTSC through the combination of two Majors. In addition, I support DHS’ efforts in working with my team to improve clarity on the information presented to students and advisors.</p>

<p>The reviewers observed that the overall number of DHS courses “appears larger than is reasonably sustainable with the existing faculty complement” and highlighted student concerns that some desirable courses are not offered most years; they recommended systematizing and streamlining processes for revising or discontinuing courses, and aligning the Department’s course offerings with strategic goals and teaching capacity.</p>	4	<p>“The decision-making process used by the department regarding if and when to discontinue courses — or to consider merging or otherwise substantially revising courses —... does appear to be based on ad hoc proposals by faculty rather than a strategic, systematic process to identify degree program wide goals and prioritize teaching capacity to meet those goals. Further, the discontinuation of courses could benefit from a more proactive approach... it seems that currently the question of whether or not to discontinue a course only comes up for discussion when a course repeatedly has low subscription and/or no available instructor for a number of terms or even years... Change in this area has the potential to significantly improve student, faculty, and staff experience with the programs.”</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing: The Department has recently had several faculty move into pre-tenure course releases or administrative positions which understandably has meant that some desirable courses had to be paused or taught by sessional instructors. While the Department has not retired many courses, we appreciate the idea of a systematic process to determine this and also want to be cautious as we welcome faculty back or find high quality alternative ways to offer desirable courses. Since the review, we put in place a system within our curriculum committee to engage in regular reviews of the curriculum with consideration for enrollment and student feedback and to review the learning outcomes of potentially low enrolled courses to ensure that each of these courses is relevant and in alignment with our mission. We are also working with the Dean’s Office to find ways to continue to deliver desirable courses that help meet student degree requirements.</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office applauds the department’s initiative in reviewing its course offerings more intentionally, taking into consideration factors such as changes in student enrolment, faculty complement, and healthcare trends. We will support them in this work as a part of the annual curriculum cycle, and in relation to program development, budget considerations, and student enrolment trends.</p>
	5	<p>“Right-size course offerings, based on programmatic strategic goals, to those which can be consistently taught by core faculty, inclusive of need for leaves and prioritize required courses over under-enrolled and/or elective courses in faculty teaching loads.”</p>	<p>Ongoing: Currently with the leadership of the Program Director and Chair, our curriculum committee works to structure course offerings and enrollment caps in courses in line with program growth figures while considering recruitment and strategic planning initiatives and mandates. For example, we have limited the number of D-level courses we offer and recognize that we need additional faculty hires in order to better attend to recent upsurges in student growth and the need for more stability in course offerings with 3 of our faculty in significant leadership positions and 12 of our faculty in pre-tenure related course releases.</p>	<p>My office and I will continue to work with the department to discuss issues pertaining to faculty complement and workload, as well as overall strategic enrolment management.</p>

<p>The reviewers noted that, although health studies course offerings cover a broad range of content areas, it is less clear that they also cover a broad array of skill areas. They suggested that DHS take a more intentional approach to the scaffolding of skills across courses, including quantitative and qualitative research skills as well as other foundational skill domains in the field.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>“Current courses represent a very broad range of content areas within the field of health studies, but it is less clear that a broad range of skill areas are also represented... there may be room for greater intentionality at the program level regarding scaffolding of skills across courses – not only quantitative and qualitative research skills, but also other foundational skill domains in the field such as information literacy, health communication for different audiences, community and stakeholder engagement, quality improvement and evaluation.”</p>	<p>Short and medium term: Currently we are scaffolding courses that enhance research skills: numerical literacy has been a key area of discussion among our curriculum committee and at our faculty meetings for over two years. Both qualitative feedback and quantitative data have informed our approach to integrating and scaffolding numerical literacy across the program. For example, a new Applied Statistics for Public Health course was introduced at the B-level to address knowledge gaps identified in C-level Community Health and Epidemiology. This initiative also allowed us to scaffold skills backward, bridging gaps as far back as high school, to better prepare students for success. We have also introduced a new course which focuses on Black community engagement by developing student skills in health communication, promotion and health literacy, and we have courses in Policy Evaluation (HLTD11H3), Community Health and Wellness (offered as an advanced topic in partnership with TAIBU Community Health Centre, HLTD47H3), Critical Health Education (HLTD80H3), and quality improvement (offered as an advanced topic, HLTD29H3). We also have several new initiatives to provide our students with more applied skills. For example, a new partnership with CanPath will provide students and faculty with access to synthetic data that will allow them to apply their research methods skills in real-world settings.</p>	<p>My office and I commend the department for leveraging Advanced Topics courses to test out and introduce students to emerging health studies-related topics, as well as research and skill development areas. This important testing ground helps the department and the Dean’s Office identify which areas and skills would be strong candidates for the development of new permanent courses. The Dean’s Office looks forward to the results of the department’s partnership with CanPath to provide program students with the opportunity to work with synthetic data as part of their coursework.</p>
	<p>7</p>	<p>“...connecting with stakeholders – such as co-op placement site supervisors, those who hire department graduates, and graduate / professional programs attended by graduates – regarding gaps in needed skills and workforce capacity may provide a valuable source of</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing: We have initiated an alumni survey initiative with our Office of Development and Alumni Relations, which will gather data on alumni’s careers after graduating and their feedback on our programs’ curriculum and structure in the context of current</p>	<p>My office and I applaud the department’s initiatives to reach out and connect with program alumni to get their input on curriculum in relation to students’ future readiness. Bringing program alumni back on campus to connect with our students not only maintains students’ sense of</p>

		<p>feedback for skills that could be explicitly targeted within existing courses.”</p>	<p>research and employment environments. Since this review, we have a renewed focus on work and professional program readiness through several ongoing initiatives. For example, we have developed a successful Allied Health Speaker Series that brings in current health professionals (often graduates of our programs) to speak about career pathways. We also conducted a gap analysis while researching comparable programs during the development of the Specialist. These efforts have directly influenced the creation of the Applied Statistics course and collaborations with coursework in departments such as Physiology, Development, and Anatomy into our curriculum.</p>	<p>belonging but further builds students’ professional networks. This is also an area where future divisional and tri-campus work is needed to better track graduates and better enable program-specific communication and outreach opportunities with alumni.</p>
<p>The reviewers raised several concerns regarding the size of the DHS faculty complement as it relates to program sustainability and departmental goals. They recommended prioritizing an expansion of the faculty complement when opportunities permit, balanced across rank and tenure/teaching streams, “to address the high student to core faculty ratio, to refine programming and the expansion of experiential opportunities, and to strengthen clusters of faculty in areas of core research strength.”</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>“We agree with the assessment in the DHS Self-Study report that there is a need to increase the faculty complement to address the high student to core faculty ratio... to refine programming and the expansion of experiential opportunities, and to strengthen clusters of faculty in areas of core research strength.”</p>	<p>Ongoing: Currently we are hiring in the area of Health Informatics and Health Professions & Practice. These two hires will help increase our faculty complement and directly address some of the skill areas identified in the comments above (e.g., numerical and information literacy, health communications).</p> <p>Medium and longer term: We are hoping to continue to hire in fields relevant to Allied Health Professions and that help us build strength in for our Health Humanities Minor, our Minor in Aging & Society, and in support of the HESA report and SAMIH initiative.</p>	<p>My office and I will continue to have regular dialogue with the chair of the department on matters pertaining to faculty complement and hiring, recognizing the significant role the department plays in supporting UTSC’s health sciences initiative and the establishment of SAMIH.</p>
	<p>9</p>	<p>“Commit to at least doubling the current faculty complement in the coming five years, balanced across rank and tenure-track/teaching streams, with additional faculty hires as needed to compensate for faculty in administrative leadership roles.”</p>	<p>Short to medium term: We view this recommendation as essential to fulfilling our commitment to the SAMIH initiative, the HESA report, and to creating the next generation of allied health professionals in the Scarborough region. Implementing item 8, with</p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation #8.</p>

			the leadership of the Dean, will support this in the short to medium term, as we are hoping to increase our faculty complement, particularly because of past deficits that have been coupled with steady growth in student enrolment.	
	10	“Strengthening research relationships for faculty and graduate students, and indicating the interdisciplinary breadth of faculty, is the diversity of graduate appointment of DHS faculty, totaling 12 graduate unit cross appointments... While this diversity indicates interdisciplinarity, it may also be indicative of a lack of consolidation around core research thematic areas. There is a danger in appointing ‘n’s of 1’ and future hiring should be in accordance with a well-thought out strategic research plan that builds strengths around core health and social challenges.”	Our interdisciplinarity is unique and makes our program stand out across the Tri-Campus. The diversity of graduate appointment of DHS faculty, totaling 12 graduate unit cross appointments adds to its complexity and is also a strength. Short to medium term: We hope to consolidate any needed hires and to build clusters around core research areas, such as Allied Health and Health Education, Health Humanities, Aging, Community Health, Paramedicine, Research Methods and Methodologies, and Statistics and Data Sciences (including Health Informatics).	I appreciate the department’s identification of core research areas that would benefit from future hires. The clusters identified align closely with campus strategic priorities. In the current budget environment, my office and I are also working actively to align future hiring to these priority areas. We will continue to engage in regular dialogue with the chair of the department as well as with the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation at UTSC in considering how best to enhance research supports and cluster opportunities.
	11	“Due to high service duties, the career progression of junior faculty members is jeopardized if their scholarship is not protected. Future hires across the ranks, including senior ranks who can assume larger workloads including mentorship responsibilities, can mitigate this situation and help ensure junior faculty are successfully promoted.”	Ongoing: Since the review, this item is something that has been discussed with the Vice-Dean, Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success and will require the leadership of the Dean to gain clarity regarding whether their might be near-term future hires at senior ranks and regarding more specific or innovative forms of motivation for faculty in senior ranks who can assume larger workloads within the department, such as mentorship responsibilities.	Please see response to recommendation #8. We recognize the pressures that the department has been experiencing. In addition to complement and administrative considerations, we also see mentorship, workload, and faculty progression as key components of this work.
The reviewers observed that faculty leaves and teaching releases can have an impact on the Department’s teaching capacity; they recommended the development of mechanisms to ensure that core and elective courses,	12	“Develop and ratify a teaching equity policy that considers an equitable balance of core and elective courses, class size, and reasons for teaching release.”	Longer term: With the support of the Vice-Dean, Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success, and the Dean, the Department plans to focus on establishing a teaching equity policy that considers an equitable balance of core and elective courses, class size,	My office and I look forward to working with the department, guiding them toward the development of a departmental teaching equity policy that considers the different factors as identified by the reviewers.

class sizes, and teaching releases are equitably balanced for faculty.			and reasons for teaching release in the short to medium term.	
The reviewers raised concerns regarding UTSC's shared staffing model, commenting that it limits capacity to support planned expansions in student programs and to leverage opportunities arising from DHS involvement in SAMIH. They recommended exploring ways to "allow adequate departmental capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement."	13	"The DHS operates with a small and committed staff complement, but their ability to advance DHS interests, especially strategically, is limited by the fact that most of the staff serve 3 units at UTSC simultaneously, and one staff serves 6 units...We recommend that by the time of the move [to SAMIH], core staff, especially an Assistant Chair/Director Administration, Operations and Strategic Planning, be allocated to the unit."	Short term and ongoing: This is an immediate concern that will require the short-term leadership of the Dean and Chair as we face the move into the new SAMIH/Garron building. We are in conversations about proposals we have developed for a revised staff structure. Increased staff support and infrastructure is crucial for our ability as a department to grow our research interests and academic output.	We are working with the department to address these concerns. The planned move to the new SAMIH / Garron building offers an important moment to address staffing needs in relation to new space configurations for the department.
	14	"Increase staff positions dedicated to DHS by at least 2.5 FTE, to allow adequate departmental capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement."	Short term and ongoing: We are in conversations about proposals we have developed for a revised staff structure as we move into the new SAMIH/Garron building and in light of major growth within our department. There is an immediate need for this that will require the support of the Dean.	See response to recommendation #13.
The reviewers recommended that equitable access to research space be provided for dry lab researchers and their teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students. They further recommended additional consultation with faculty and the allocation of temporary space to meet current needs in advance of the planned move to SAMIH.	15	"Provide equitable access to research space for "dry lab" researchers and their substantial research teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students. These space requirements may be met in the planned SAMIH, however, more consultation should be undertaken with DHS faculty and temporary space should be provided to address current needs."	Ongoing: Since this review, we are forming a departmental committee for 2025-26 to address space allocations for the move into the SAMIH/Garron building which will take place in 2026-27.	My office and I look forward to advocating spacing allocation needs on behalf of the department when engaging in discussions with the Office of the Vice-President & Principal and the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation as the construction of the Myron and Berna Garron Health Sciences Complex (SAMIH) continues and nears completion.
The reviewers noted student, staff, and faculty desire for additional opportunities for community building and support; suggestions included a departmental orientation, social activities for DHS faculty and staff, and	16	"...a clear theme emerged from both student comments and discussions with staff and more junior faculty about the need for additional opportunities for community building and support... Given that peer institutions are providing such opportunities and resources at the	Ongoing: We also recognize the need for additional opportunities for community building and support and intend to work with the Department of Community Partnerships and Engagement at UTSC, to work with HSSA (our affiliated student	My office and I commend the department's efforts to work with other UTSC offices and colleagues to build students' sense of belonging and increase students' opportunities to interact with and learn from peers, faculty members, and alumni, and professionals working in various

<p>support activities and resources during stressful times.</p>		<p>department or program level to cultivate a culture of caring and a sense of belonging, especially among minoritized and first-generation university students, additional resources to support this work for such a vibrantly growing set of degree programs is merited.”</p>	<p>association), and to work more closely with our Co-op Office and other campus units to build strength here. In addition, we will continue to run our Allied Health Speaker Series. Following this review, we are launching our first DHS Research Day, where awards to increase recognition, belonging and inclusion will be presented and where students and faculty can present and discuss their research. The department remains open to developing relationships with the Office of Student Experience and Wellbeing to help further the culture of caring and sense of belonging students feel in our program and more broadly, on campus. We welcome support from the Dean's Office & select HESA Chairs to maximize impact and strengthen partnerships and collaboration.</p>	<p>health studies fields. The Dean's Office is actively supporting this work, in particular in relation to the Pathways for Health Professions Certificate and related co-curricular initiatives.</p>
<p>The reviewers recommended that DHS create a strategic research and academic plan, aligned with institutional strategy and goals; they noted that the plan should include a clear vision and mission to define the Department's academic priorities and commitments, guiding future hiring decisions and the establishment of research clusters.</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>“The DHS would benefit from a strategic research and academic plan with a clear vision and mission that then motivates its educational programs, research clusters and associated faculty hiring. The strategic plan should be refreshed at least every 5 years and consider institutional strategic plans. Students and external partners, especially community partners in the region, should be consulted in the development of the strategic plan.”</p>	<p>Short to medium term: Recognizing that we would benefit from a strategic research and academic plan with a clear vision and mission, we held a set of retreats and consultations in preparation for our review in September 2023, December 2023, January 2024, and following our review in September 2024 and December 2024 with a wide range of stakeholders relevant to DHS under the leadership of the chair. Subsequently at our retreat in December 2024 and February 2025, we brought in an external consultant who helped us formulate a clear mission, vision, and provided guidance on our strategic research and academic plan, which we are currently in the process of sharing on our website and in our public facing documents. We welcome support from the Dean's Office to ensure that our strategic plans are in alignment with the SAMIH initiative and consistent with budgetary realities.</p>	<p>I am delighted to hear that the department has convened the last couple of months to formulate its latest mission and vision, which will help set the tone of the department and its goals and objectives moving forward. My office and I look forward to reviewing, and offering our input to, the department's newly developed strategic research and academic plans. We see strong alignment with the work that the department is doing and campus strategic priorities, and see the department as playing a pivotal role in cross-disciplinary conversations related to the health sciences at UTSC as SAMIH is established.</p>

	18	<p>“Align research priorities with a strategic plan, mission, and values statement to strengthen interdisciplinary priority clusters and to develop areas of uniqueness, for which DHS will become known. Consolidate first around areas of strength with recruitment and then build out new research clusters.”</p>	<p>Medium to longer term: In response to the reviewer’s recommendations and as mentioned in item #17, we are working to align our research priorities with the strategic plan, mission, and values statement we have developed with the support of an external consultation. To this effect, we are consolidating and strengthening our interdisciplinary priority clusters and intend to continue to revisit this over the next several years as our faculty complement strengthens.</p>	Please see response to recommendation #17.
<p>The reviewers observed that UTSC has a number of programs and initiatives to support Indigenous students, but noted that it was not clear how much DHS students can access them; they recommended close attention to the recruitment, retention, and success rates of Indigenous students, and exploring whether Indigenous students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship.</p>	19	<p>“The UTSC hosts several Indigenous initiatives... but most of these seem to be associated with the Sociology program. It is not clear to what extent, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the DHS can access these initiatives. Again, with a clear strategic plan, the DHS could specify how its students can engage in these initiatives through their academic curricula. In particular, it would be important to identify Indigenous students and monitor their recruitment, retention and success rates, as well as to explore whether Indigenous students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship.”</p>	<p>Medium term: The Department is committed to Indigenous initiatives as evidenced by the research concentrations of four core faculty. Currently, we participate in the UTSC Working Circle with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. As well, we are developing a section within our departmental website to feature core research and coursework directly relevant to Indigenous Initiatives. The page will include information about relevant DHS courses; research projects from our faculty and research assistants as well as graduate students’ openings for these projects. In addition, to achieve this medium-term goal, we are working with UTSC’s Registrar’s Office, Admissions and Student Recruitment Office, Development and Alumni Relations Office, and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives with respect to data and alumni tracking.</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office applauds the department’s efforts to work with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and other offices to collect data and track the progress of students. The Dean’s Office supports the department’s initiative to highlight research and coursework that intersect with Indigenous initiatives. This is work that also connects to the UTSC campus curriculum review, which has been led by the Dean’s Office. With the establishment of Indigenous House in June 2025, we anticipate further opportunities to strengthen Indigenous research and curriculum at UTSC. We appreciate the reviewers’ comments about the importance of assessing potential barriers for Indigenous students in co-op, research, mentorship, and other areas, and we will continue to partner with the department, with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and other units at UTSC and across the University of Toronto to address these concerns.</p>
	20	<p>“Prospectively collect equity-related data and provide to all departments (including DHS) in a de-identified manner that allows monitoring and intervention for barriers to access and success within departmental programs.”</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing: This is an area of priority for us as a department and we will work with the Dean’s Office to implement the UTSC commitments to this effort as stated in the Scarborough Charter, the U of T</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office is committed to the goals of inclusive excellence outlined in the campus strategic plan, and will continue to collaborate with the department and with offices such as the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Admissions and Student Recruitment, and the Department of</p>

			Anti-Black Racism Task Force Report, and other relevant resources.	Community Partnerships on examining and removing barriers to access for students enrolled in DHS's programs. The university as a whole is also moving towards collecting more comprehensive equity-related data which is crucial to support this work.
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	21	"Numerical literacy at the level required, especially in the Population Health program may need to be addressed through enhancing educational supports or addition of a numeracy-skills-focused course specific to population health."	<p>Short term and ongoing: Plans to enhance numerical literacy have become a priority for the Department. For further clarification, please refer to the response in point 6 above. As well, please note that we are working with the Registrar's Office and the Office of Admissions and Student Recruitment to add Grade 12 math as recommended (but not required) in recruitment publications for prospective students (e.g., Viewbook) as of next year. To address preparation gaps, we have also revised our program requirements, mandating students take a specific general statistics course in their first year (STAB23H3). This ensures they avoid the more commonly selected statistics course, which explicitly minimizes mathematical calculations in its description.</p> <p>The previous scaffolding was as follows:</p> <p>STAB22H3 (Statistics I) or STAB23H3 (Introduction to Statistics for the Social Sciences) in Year 1 or 2 HLTB15H3 (Health Research Methodologies) and HLTB16H3 (Public Health) in Year 2 HLTC27H3 (Community Health and Epidemiology) in Year 3</p> <p>The current scaffolding is now (for Population Health):</p> <p>Grade 12 Math recommended (any)</p>	The Dean's Office supports the department's efforts to better scaffold skills across its course offerings and clarify expectations for students. The Centre for Teaching and Learning is a crucial resource for the department in this area. The programs and curriculum team in the Dean's Office is also available to advise on strategies for strengthening scaffolding structures in the department's curricular offerings without compromising the department's commitment to equity and access.

		<p>STAB23H3 (Introduction to Statistics for the Social Sciences) in Year 1 HLTB15H3 (Health Research Methodologies), HLTB16H3 (Public Health), and HLTB27H3 (Applied Statistics for Public Health) in Year 2 HLTC27H3 (Community Health and Epidemiology) in Year 3.</p> <p>This work has been completed since the review under the leadership of the chair, working closely with the Program Coordinator.</p>	
22	<p>“...in the absence of broader alumni-specific data from the institution, engagement with community partners who commonly hire and/or admit program graduates for their feedback on current degree program quality and the performance of its graduates may be worth considering.”</p>	<p>Medium term: We have sought support from the Development and Alumni Relations Office and are actively working with students and alumni and community organizations (including but not limited to the Scarborough Health Network) to build sustainable relationships that will help increase hiring opportunities for our students. This is a medium-term goal that requires support of the Dean’s Office and the Research Office.</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office supports the department’s collaborations with the Development and Alumni Relations Office and other community organizations to monitor trends and emerging areas of skill development for students and graduates in health studies-related programs.</p>
23	<p>“Develop and maintain stronger relationships with community partners and alumni, to enhance experiential learning opportunities and access to program outcome data.”</p>	<p>Longer term: Through their research projects, our faculty have developed numerous partnerships with local, national, and international community partners. We will be exploring how those relationships can be leveraged for the department to carry out its new mission, vision, and values more effectively. In 2023, we initiated the Allied Health Speaker Series and are keen to work with others across the campus and in relation to SAMIH continue to develop and maintain stronger relationships with community partners and alumni, to enhance experiential learning opportunities and access to program outcome data. This is a longer-term goal that we will work with the Experiential Learning</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office supports the department’s efforts to work with the various offices within UTSC and with community partners to further develop and continually refine experiential learning opportunities to meet the needs of students, alumni, and employers. We are also prioritizing clearer data-gathering related to experiential learning to better support the department and the campus as a whole in meeting the SMA goal of 100% engagement with experiential learning. Experiential learning is a historic strength of UTSC and a significant priority for the future.</p>

			team to brainstorm ideas and implement opportunities.	
24	“At present, students are not formally included in DHS committees, and the reviewers believe this is a missed opportunity to engage students who are future alumni and leaders. As the department matures, thought should be given to the appropriate governance mechanisms that distribute the burden between strategy development and operational decision making.”	<p>Short term and ongoing: We have strong engagement with students through HSSA and other student associations which ensure student feedback and input while we develop formal engagement opportunities through committee membership for the future. We have begun to implement this in curriculum and our current faculty search committees based on the feedback from this review.</p>	The Dean’s Office commends the department’s efforts to get more of their program students involved in the department’s decision making.	
25	“Build consistent discretionary funding into the department budget for the chair to use for evolving departmental priorities, such as undergraduate research assistantships, etc.”	The department is open to exploring this further and will defer to the Dean’s Office for guidance.	The Dean’s Office is currently in dialogue with departments to assess budget needs as the campus prepares to move to a new budgetary model. We recognize the importance of some degree of flexibility and autonomy for departments within budgetary frameworks.	
26	“Provide training for DHS leadership in advancement and access to advancement professionals at UofT to develop and implement an integrated alumni relations and advancement strategy for DHS.”	<p>Short term and ongoing: Following the March 2024 cyclical review of the department, we worked with the UTSC Development and Alumni Relations Office to introduce a new scholarship for our students. This initiative has raised over \$50,000 for two endowed scholarships to be awarded annually to students studying Aging & Society. Through our continued collaboration with this office, an additional scholarship will be introduced in the next year. The current chair is very open to engaging in additional training.</p>	The Dean’s Office appreciates the department’s collaboration with the Development and Alumni Relations Office to discuss and implement advancement and alumni engagement strategies.	

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Health Studies – Health Policy (HBA): Major, Major Co-op Health Studies – Population Health (HBS): Major, Major Co-op Health Humanities Minor (Arts) Health Studies Minor (Arts) (<i>suspended</i>)
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Health and Society
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, University of Toronto Scarborough
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tania Bubela, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University • Michelle M. Garrison, Professor, Department of Public Health, Purdue University • Lili Liu, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health, University of Waterloo
Date of Review Visit:	March 20-21, 2024
Review Report Received by VPAP:	June 21, 2024
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	March 11, 2025
Date Reported to AP&P:	April 10, 2025

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: May 31 - June 1, 2016

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Notable commitment of the faculty, staff, students, and administration to the success of the program and enabling it to realize its full potential
- Program fills a unique and exciting niche in health studies and is at the leading edge in Canada for health humanities
- Immensely popular with students, who appreciate the quality of the educational experience provided by the Health Sciences faculty
- Excellent advising and support staff
- Opportunity to become a leader in training the next generation of workers and scholars in this field

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Creating an appropriate academic home for Health Studies, which would provide a base for content knowledge, research activity, and program delivery
- Reconsidering the programs' curricular pathways to facilitate student learning and highlight the programs' interdisciplinary strengths
- Reviewing the faculty complement size and structure to ensure balance and adequate support for the academic programs
- Better distributing and more appropriately supporting administrative duties

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

External Review Material: Terms of reference; Self-study and supporting data and appendices; Review report template; Site visit schedule; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all course descriptions and syllabi; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Supplemental Material from Site Visit Meetings: Departmental budget/OTO data; Presentation decks from the Department of Health and Society, the UTSC Arts & Science Co-op Office, and the UTSC Office of the Registrar.

Consultation Process

Decanal group, faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units, including the UTSC Library, the Office of the Registrar, the Arts & Science Co-op Office, and the Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program(s)

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ DHS programs are in high demand, especially Population Health
- Objectives
 - ▶ Students emphasized the strength of DHS educational programming in meeting its objective of foregrounding social determinants of health and health equity across courses
 - ▶ Clear and effective progress towards improving the first-year core course sequence to ensure that students have the opportunity to develop a shared vocabulary together for subsequent coursework; to acquire adequate exposure to different domain areas within health studies to make informed choices about future course selection; and to begin developing the skills to seek, evaluate, and discuss social determinants of health equity locally, nationally, and globally
 - ▶ Wide breadth of knowledge covered in required, selective, and elective courses; students develop a knowledge set to draw on in subsequent depth and/or application focused courses, and to identify areas of interest for further undergraduate or graduate study
 - ▶ Strong opportunities for students to develop depth of knowledge in areas related to health equity and social determinants of health; these areas are well-aligned with faculty expertise, student interests, and workforce needs
 - ▶ Students develop adequate methodological knowledge to consider new information in the context of its methodological origins, and to take this into account in considering the validity and generalizability of conclusions
 - ▶ Students in upper-year courses have multiple engaging ways to apply their knowledge and experience, through both traditionally academic exercises and in the context of experiential learning opportunities
 - ▶ Curriculum structure and the faculty appear to do an excellent job helping students learn to consider the external and internal validity of information
 - ▶ DHS programs help students learn to listen and read critically and with intellectual curiosity; upper-year courses especially provide opportunities for students to develop written and oral skills in communicating for academic audiences
 - ▶ Students “consistently showed themselves to be informed, creative thinkers who had learned to ask brave questions, strategically seek out answers individually and working together, and to already be considering how they will continue this process post-graduation”

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Unique and highly valuable course offerings approach health from biological science, public health, and medical humanities perspectives, providing graduates with a more holistic view of health and society and a broader lens on future career opportunities
 - ▶ Commendable opportunities for experiential learning include service-based learning, internships, undergraduate research experiences, and co-op programs
 - ▶ Programs and courses appear to use effective and appropriate models of learning delivery, including a mix of lecture, discussion, case-based learning, and experiential service-based learning
 - ▶ Department's decision-making process for revising, merging, or discontinuing courses appears to involve thoughtful deliberation by the curriculum committee
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Adoption of universal design principles and proactive disability-related accommodations noted as a strength in DHS; adoption of these approaches by the co-op programs noted as "especially impressive given that this is an area that often lags behind classroom-based teaching"
 - ▶ Greater flexibility afforded by smaller class sizes in upper-level courses has enabled adoption of universal design approaches and made implementation of accommodations more seamless and effective
 - ▶ "Black Student Excellence Award" given to three undergraduate students each year who identify as Black; recipients are selected via an application process detailing academic excellence as well as leadership and/or community engagement
 - ▶ DHS offers an annual essay award for students' work in Black Health studies
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Assessment of student learning is achieved through appropriate and effective methods, especially in upper-level courses
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students expressed appreciation for the quality of instruction, the availability and flexibility of most faculty to accommodate student needs, and the creation of safe learning environments in which students bring their diverse lived experience to discussions of complex health and social issues
 - ▶ Students commented that the DHS Health Studies programs are "increasingly preferred by some students as a pathway to the health professions or graduate studies, instead of degree programs that exclusively focus on the biomedical sciences"
 - ▶ Course syllabi, discussions with faculty, and comments by students indicate that faculty care deeply about student learning experience and outcomes
 - ▶ Strong camaraderie among students, particularly within the DHS student organization
 - ▶ Students report that they feel valued by faculty and staff, and safe in integrating their lived experience into classroom learning
 - ▶ Students report a positive learning environment in which genuine intellectual curiosity and intellectual risk-taking is encouraged

- ▶ “Get Finished” initiative, providing funding to students with up to 2.5 credits remaining in their degree, is an innovative benefit for those who may otherwise struggle to complete their program
- ▶ Some students reported enrolling in DHS programs due to the warmth and inclusion they experienced within DHS classes
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Steadily increasing annual enrolments in Health Studies over the past 7 years

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Objectives
 - ▶ Students and faculty identified subject areas such as epidemiology in which opportunities to develop depth of knowledge could be strengthened
 - ▶ Reviewers note issues including teaching capacity and access to research/experiential learning opportunities that may limit DHS’s ability to promise all students knowledge application opportunities that align with UTSC’s institutional strengths and strategic goals
 - ▶ Developing skills to communicate with non-academic audiences appears to be less intentionally woven across the curriculum and more dependent on individual instructor decisions
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Adding a high school math requirement to address issues with numerical literacy may run counter to other UTSC priorities, such as equitable access to post-secondary education for students from the area
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Usage of library liaison assistance in support of course development, while widely adopted, appears to occur in a largely ad hoc manner with potential for gaps
 - ▶ Teaching capacity barriers appear to inhibit consistent and predictable availability of course-based experiential learning, which is typically more time-intensive for instructors than traditional classroom-based teaching
 - ▶ Inadequate research space for dry labs limits the ability of faculty to meaningfully and sustainably engage all interested undergraduates in their research
 - ▶ As noted in the previous review, the administrative, teaching, and advising burdens of offering separate programs in Population Health and Health Policy appear to outweigh the benefits
 - ▶ Breadth of skills developed in courses does not appear to match the breadth of content areas covered; students noted some repetition in skills taught, as well as insufficient opportunity to develop specific skills or knowledge for success in graduate programs
 - ▶ Health Policy major does not appear to cover the full range of skills and content typically covered in similar programs, due to the limited number of departmental faculty with expertise in this area
 - ▶ Total number of courses offered each year in addition to required core courses appears unsustainable given existing faculty complement, resulting in consistently high reliance on sessional instructors for delivery of core courses

- ▶ Students shared experiences of disappointment upon finding that many desired courses are offered infrequently or not at all
- ▶ Decision-making around course revision or discontinuation appears to be based on ad hoc proposals when a course has low enrolment no available instructor, rather than a strategic, systematic process based on program-wide goals
- ▶ In some cases, faculty teaching effort has been focused on courses with lower enrolments, resulting in imbalances in teaching workload
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Limited faculty teaching capacity, particularly in larger introductory courses, appears to afford fewer opportunities to implement universal design approaches and accommodations at more than a superficial level
 - ▶ Students report institutional challenges to effective accommodations, including inconsistent approaches taken by faculty in the interpretation and implementation of accommodations, as well as cultural and documentation barriers to requesting accommodations
 - ▶ Extent to which Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in DHS programs have access to UTSC's Indigenous initiatives is unclear
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Students raised concerns regarding the inability to receive feedback on final papers for courses, noting that without such feedback it is difficult to gauge the extent to which they have achieved course learning objectives
 - ▶ Reliance on quizzes and exams in lower-level courses may not equally evaluate the depth of understanding and skills across all student populations, and can exacerbate pre-existing inequities in education
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ High school students may be less aware of DHS programs when applying to U of T, potentially due to low awareness of the programs among counselors, as well as inconsistent information about DHS programs on University websites
 - ▶ Incorrect or missing information about the two majors on University websites highlights how the separate programs create confusion for institutional administrators and prospective students
 - ▶ Co-op program growth may be limited by student barriers to entry, including cost and the required number of work terms
 - ▶ Goal for co-op students complete their programs within four years may be a barrier in the form of a stigma for students wishing to take longer
 - ▶ "We note that the review team did not meet alone with students"
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Reviewers note slight decline in Health Policy enrolments in past 5 years
 - ▶ Available data on general student retention and graduation do not necessarily reflect whether program quality is sufficient to meet program objectives and to facilitate student success in achieving program learning outcomes

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Objectives
 - ▶ Subject area breadth can help set the program apart from peers, if it is well communicated
 - ▶ Promising plans to increase knowledge depth through increased laddering of content across the curriculum require focused hiring to expand faculty expertise within focused cluster areas
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Numerical literacy, particularly in the Population Health program, may need to be addressed through enhancing educational supports or the addition of a numeracy-skills-focused course specific to population health
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Combine the Population Health and Health Policy programs into a single program with both HBA and HBA degree options
 - ▶ Proposed Specialist program would enable DHS to take advantage of existing required courses and allow students to choose from clusters of electives representing fundamental health studies domains; a unified Major program could potentially use the same general approach
 - ▶ Reduced student to faculty ratio would allow more flexibility to select most effective course delivery modes based on content rather than class size
 - ▶ Consider developing greater intentionality at the program level regarding scaffolding of skills across courses in foundational disciplinary skill domains
 - ▶ Students voiced support for more work-integrated learning opportunities that could combine classroom experiences with community engagement
 - ▶ Discontinuation of courses could benefit from a more proactive approach, with potential to significantly improve student, faculty, and staff experience with DHS programs
 - ▶ Right-size course offerings based on programmatic strategic goals, to a set of courses which can be consistently taught by core faculty with priority for required courses over under-enrolled and/or elective courses
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ The UTSC hosts several Indigenous initiatives (e.g., Indigenous House, Indigenous Garden, Indigenous Place Making, Global Field School: Indigenous Costa Rica, Indigenous Entrepreneurship, Indigenous Knowledges and Resources), but most of these seem to be associated with the Sociology program.
 - ▶ Consider ways for DHS students to engage in Indigenous initiatives through their academic curricula
 - ▶ Monitor rates of recruitment, retention, and graduation of Indigenous students, and explore whether these students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship
 - ▶ As equity data become available, develop metrics to illustrate effectiveness of DHS's approaches to removing barriers and increasing retention rates for Black students

- ▶ Explore ways to effectively gather information on barriers to equity, diversity, and inclusion experienced by students, possibly through de-identified administrative data, surveys, or focus groups conducted by experienced facilitators from outside the department
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Seek guidance from Dean's office on providing students with feedback on final papers for courses; consider developing standardized language to use in course syllabi on this issue
 - ▶ Consult with the Centre for Teaching and Learning regarding innovation in learning assessment and pedagogical research, to explore opportunities for employing alternate forms of assessment in courses
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Engage external co-op program stakeholders (e.g., co-op placement site supervisors, employers, graduate programs) to consult on program quality and identify gaps in needed skills and workforce capacity that could be targeted within courses

2. Graduate Program(s) n/a

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - ▶ DHS focuses its multi-disciplinary research areas on Research in Life Course and the Life Cycle; Social Hierarchies and Marginality; Cultures of Health and Illness; and Environment and Health
 - ▶ Faculty members' funding and scholarly profile, with respect to total funding received and participation in Tri-Agency funding, is consistent with expectations in health domains
 - ▶ Centre for Global Disability Studies has the potential to catalyze strengths in unique research and undergraduate and graduate training strength; DHS is well positioned to contribute with significant interdisciplinary hires in the topic area
- Faculty
 - ▶ Exceptional recent recruitment of tenure and teaching-stream faculty, forming a solid base for expanding to meet demand from students, employers, and research organizations for health-related programming
 - ▶ Indigenous health and wellbeing is a focus of some DHS faculty members
 - ▶ DHS has made meaningful investments and progress in the assessment of teaching, including routine peer teaching evaluations of sessional instructors
 - ▶ Impressive recent faculty hires, with the majority from internationally recognized institutions; recent hires with health/social workforce experience bring sound practical knowledge and community partnership strengths
 - ▶ Several faculty members have received high profile awards for their scholarship, including many internal awards as well as a Canada Research Chair

- ▶ Number (12) and diversity of units in which graduate faculty are cross-appointed indicates their interdisciplinary breadth, and strengthens research relationships for faculty and graduate students
- ▶ Teaching faculty have a high degree of content expertise and are fully engaged with research and enhanced skills development in teaching and learning
- ▶ Well-organized mentorship program for incoming faculty
- ▶ Several faculty mentioned strong appreciation of departmental support to engage in the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity's Faculty Success Program

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Research
 - ▶ Uneven funding success and levels among faculty suggest greater support is required for pre- and post- grant support
- Faculty
 - ▶ Assessment of teaching does not appear to be consistently occurring for core faculty
 - ▶ Significant proportion of Black students appear to be drawn to the mentorship of Black faculty, which may result in disproportionate mentoring workloads; similar patterns may exist for faculty sharing other minoritized identities with students
 - ▶ Reviewers did not identify clear mechanisms in place to increase the sustainability of informal mentorship
 - ▶ Current faculty complement is insufficient to sustain the number of courses across the four undergraduate and two co-op programs for 1200+ undergraduate students
 - ▶ Faculty complement counts appear to overestimate the number who are available to contribute annually to teaching and service in DHS, due to leaves, teaching releases, and undertaking department and faculty administrative positions
 - ▶ Faculty workload policy was created prior to departmentalization and has never been ratified, leading to disparities across faculty in teaching workloads
 - ▶ Small number of active tenure-stream faculty limits access to research opportunities for undergraduate students
 - ▶ Due to the limited number of senior faculty dedicated to DHS, junior faculty are required to perform considerable service duties in addition to teaching, graduate program and external service commitments; reviewers note potential negative impacts on junior faculty workload, career progression, and retention
 - ▶ Diversity of graduate cross-appointments indicates interdisciplinarity but may also indicate a lack of consolidation around core research thematic areas
 - ▶ DHS is too small to address all the sub-topics within its four broadly specified areas
 - ▶ Without an improved student/faculty ratio, DHS cannot contemplate starting its own graduate program or make sustainable progress towards many goals related to undergraduate programs

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Additional pre- and post-grant supports will be needed if the unit is to reach its full research potential
 - ▶ Consider additional hires in disability studies to strengthen capacity in this area and to make the unit more distinctive and competitive
 - ▶ Align research priorities with a strategic plan, mission, and values statement to strengthen interdisciplinary priority clusters and to develop areas of uniqueness
- Faculty
 - ▶ Internal awards are an appropriate mechanism to build the profile of early-career researchers and educators towards nationally significant awards
 - ▶ Strategically identify departmental and program goals in teaching growth; utilize peer evaluation processes to help advance these goals
 - ▶ Having core courses taught by core faculty is in the best interests of the students and leads to best outcomes in programs with well-thought-out curricular priorities
 - ▶ Faculty hiring, including of senior faculty who can assume larger workloads including mentorship responsibilities, can mitigate impacts of high service requirements for junior faculty and help ensure they are successfully promoted
 - ▶ Conduct future hiring in accordance with a well-thought out strategic research plan that builds strengths around core health and social challenges
 - ▶ Focus faculty hires in areas of obvious emergent strength and regional significance, such as health equity, disability studies, Indigenous health and environmental health
 - ▶ “Commit to at least doubling the current faculty complement in the coming five years, balanced across rank and tenure-track/teaching streams, with additional faculty hires as needed to compensate for faculty in administrative leadership roles”
 - ▶ Develop and ratify a teaching equity policy that considers an equitable balance of core and elective courses, class size, and reasons for teaching release

4. Administration

Note: Issues that are addressed through specific University processes and therefore considered out of scope for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns) are routed to proper University offices to be addressed, and are therefore not included in the Review Summary component of the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Students and faculty feel able to share lived experience, engage in challenging conversations, and centre health equity in the DHS learning environment
 - ▶ Faculty feel well supported by colleagues and staff in navigating teaching and research expectations
 - ▶ DHS operates with a small and committed staff complement

- ▶ Creation of the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH), and the inclusion of DHS, has potential to enhance the profile and impact of DHS research through increased linkages with health care practitioners and community partners
- ▶ Morale among faculty, students and staff appears reasonable, albeit with caveats for the unit size relative to teaching, service, and research expectations
- ▶ Strong support for the current Chair, and a sense that DHS was moving in the right direction with respect to work culture and relationships
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Current leadership brings increased and welcomed stability to DHS, which will be essential to meet future ambitions of the unit and UTSC
 - ▶ University's library infrastructure, especially online resources, are world-leading;
 - ▶ Students and faculty have access to a research librarian with expertise in health
 - ▶ Library staff contribute to training in strategies, evidence synthesis, and scoping reviews
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Commendable progress by UTSC leadership and DHS faculty and staff in advancing recommendations from the previous UTQAP review, including significant and meaningful improvements in curricular quality, alignment, and teaching capacity
 - ▶ UTSC and DHS attract a highly diverse student body and faculty complement, reflective of the needs of underserved populations in the Scarborough region
 - ▶ DHS has great potential to be a national leader in interdisciplinary health sciences education and to contribute its expertise across science, social science, and humanities domains to SAMIH
 - ▶ DHS has the potential to meet student demand for health-relevant undergraduate programming
 - ▶ DHS research priorities align with local and global challenges
 - ▶ DHS is poised to make significant contributions to Canadian challenges of an aging population, health equity, including ableism, Indigenous health, and structural and institutional racism in the health and social sectors
 - ▶ DHS faculty and students are well-positioned to meet the complex challenges of the diverse populations of the Scarborough region, including instantiating the principles of the Scarborough Charter to address anti-Black racism and promote Black inclusion in Canadian higher education through its faculty, research and teaching

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Students, faculty, and staff commented on the need for additional opportunities for community building and support; staff expressed a desire to provide such opportunities and resources but reported that current workload capacity prevents them from taking on these additional tasks
 - ▶ Morale is threatened by uncertainty over the move to SAMIH, combined with high service burden for junior faculty and the general under-resourcing of staff

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Considerable concern that DHS has not had faculty and staff capacity to develop and implement strategic plans to ensure that their degree programs are the best fit for student and departmental needs
 - ▶ Ability of staff to strategically advance DHS interests is limited by shared staffing arrangements across multiple UTSC units; all staff agreed that they would need to be dedicated to one unit to perform at their full capacity
 - ▶ Staff support is insufficient for planned expansions in student programming, such as diplomas and certificates
 - ▶ Plans for move to SAMIH building have not been adequately communicated to DHS staff and faculty, resulting in some anxiety in the unit
 - ▶ Shared staffing model raises concerns with the planned move to a new building when DHS relocates to SAMIH
 - ▶ Concerns whether access to the dedicated health librarian will continue after moving to SAMIH
 - ▶ DHS has outgrown its current space allocation; unit houses current faculty and staff complement and has access to wet-laboratory space for environmental health research, but virtually no dry- laboratory research space
 - ▶ Office space allocated for postdoctoral fellows does is not aligned with research team operations
 - ▶ Tri-campus graduate program structure tends to focus graduate student activities on the St. George campus
 - ▶ Lack of access to research space limits undergraduate students' research opportunities
 - ▶ DHS governance structure for committee work conducive to strategic thinking across research and teaching priorities seems underdeveloped
 - ▶ Students are not formally included in DHS committees, a missed opportunity to engage students who are future alumni and leaders
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Without a clear strategic plan for DHS is challenging to understand how the unit aligns with the UTSC's strategic plan
 - ▶ Without a Vision, Mission, Values and signature or key strategic initiatives, DHS lacks a road map to direct its path and growth into the future
 - ▶ Resources available to DHS are insufficient to meet current operations and limit capacity for future growth and expansion
 - ▶ Leadership in DHS do not have training in advancement or direct access to advancement professionals

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Explore ways to provide additional resources at the department or program level to cultivate a culture of caring and a sense of belonging, especially among minoritized and first-generation university students

- ▶ Develop and maintain stronger relationships with community partners and alumni, to enhance experiential learning opportunities and access to program outcome data
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Communicate clearly regarding the Chair's authority to assign teaching to address high-enrolment and core priorities
 - ▶ Faculty and staff complement will need to be strengthened to leverage the opportunities generated by SAMIH
 - ▶ Increase dedicated DHS staff positions to allow adequate capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement
 - ▶ Include library resources in SAMIH planning, to facilitate interactions with faculty and students in DHS
 - ▶ Provide equitable access to research space for "dry lab" researchers and their teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students
 - ▶ Consult with DHS faculty regarding space requirements for planned move to SAMIH
 - ▶ Conduct inclusive discussions with stakeholders regarding research and office space planning
 - ▶ Consider how departmental governance structures can be optimized to distribute the burden between strategy development and operational decision making
 - ▶ Develop clear terms of reference, membership criteria, and a more equitable distribution of service burdens, for departmental governance committees
 - ▶ Build consistent discretionary funding into the department budget to use for evolving departmental priorities, including undergraduate research assistantships
 - ▶ Provide DHS leadership with regular meetings with UTSC leadership to transparently discuss budget and enrolment planning
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Opportunities for DHS arise from the creation of SAMIH and associated infrastructure, including a new building
 - ▶ DHS has an opportunity prior to the opening of SAMIH to clearly articulate its role as a leader in the field of integrated health
 - ▶ Provide training for DHS leadership in advancement, and access to University advancement professionals, to develop and implement an integrated alumni relations and advancement strategy for DHS
 - ▶ Explore ways to support DHS programming through philanthropy
 - ▶ Work with University Development and Alumni Relations offices to obtain information on former students' satisfaction with the program and the impact of the co-op experience on future career successes; data "would need to be aligned and collected with respect to objectives and learning outcomes, all of which would be contained in a strategic plan specific to the DHS"
 - ▶ Prospectively collect equity-related data and provide to all departments in a de-identified manner to allow monitoring and intervention for barriers to access and success within departmental programs

- ▶ Develop a strategic plan, mission, and values statement to use in making decisions regarding program and course offerings, faculty hiring, research cluster strengthening, departmental policies, etc.; students and external partners, especially community partners in the region, should be consulted in developing the plan
- ▶ Refresh strategic plan at least every 5 years with consideration of institutional strategic plans
- ▶ Carefully consider the development of new programs considering current workload and capacity to deliver; “We recommend consolidation at this point in time, rather than expansion”



Office of the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean

March 11, 2025

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Division of the Vice-President & Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Health and Society, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for your letter of November 25, 2024, requesting my administrative response to the March 2024 external review of the Department of Health and Society. I want to extend my gratitude to the review team—Tania Bubela, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University; Michelle M. Garrison, Professor, Department of Public Health, Purdue University; and Lili Liu, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health, University of Waterloo—for their consultation with the Department during the site visit from March 20-21, 2024, and for their report, which was finalized on June 18, 2024, and shared with the Department.

We deeply appreciate the reviewers' assessment of the Department's course offerings that examine health from multiple perspectives, as well as their commendation of the Department's commitment to inclusive pedagogies, with the goal of enabling students to share their lived experiences in safe and holistic learning environments. In addition to praising the Department's programs and the opportunities for experiential learning offered to students, the reviewers also commended the teaching faculty's content expertise and engagement with research and skills development in teaching and learning.

The report from the review team identifies a number of areas for enhancement and development, including strategically considering the future directions of the Population Health and Health Policy programs; systematizing and streamlining processes for revising or discontinuing courses; taking a more intentional approach to the scaffolding of skills across courses; prioritizing an expansion of the faculty complement when opportunities permit; offering additional opportunities for community building and support for students, staff, and faculty; and creating a strategic research and academic plan aligned with institutional strategy and goals. With this letter, I have included a table summarizing the responses to the specific recommendations of the reviewers and anticipated timelines for implementation, where appropriate.

Once again, I thank the review team for their insightful and valuable review of the Department and its programs. I look forward to supporting the Department in implementing the recommendations of this report. The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Health and Society. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared in **Fall 2028**. The next external review of the Department will take place **no later than the 2031-32 academic year**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karin Ruhlandt".

Professor Karin Ruhlandt
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

2023-24 UTQAP Review of UTSC Department of Health & Society- Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers made recommendations related to the configuration and consolidation of the Department's program offerings, commenting in general that DHS should carefully consider whether new program development is appropriate in light of current workload and capacity to deliver; they recommended strategic consideration of future directions for the Population Health and Health Policy programs, including potential integration.	1	"Carefully consider the development of new programs considering current workload and capacity to deliver. We recommend consolidation at this point in time, rather than expansion."	There is a strong desire to maintain two programs given that the two fields (Health Policy BA and Population Health BSc) best reflect the interdisciplinary nature of our unit, the diversity of student interests, and our future strategic plans. The Department of Health and Society also remains committed to offering these two programs instead of consolidating because each program plays a pivotal role in preparing graduates to meet the different challenges of healthcare in today's landscape. The BA program provides foundation in health policy and social determinants of health while the BSc program offers training in body systems and scientific inquiry. As we look towards SAMIH (Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health), these programs as they currently stand will attract diverse and engaged students with, the goal of continuing to grow interdisciplinary health education and training. Short term and ongoing:	My office appreciates the department's desire to maintain its two existing programs in Population Health and Health Policy as-is. At UTSC, we are keen on pursuing interdisciplinarity, recognizing our strengths in both arts and sciences in existing programs. My team and I will continue to work with the department to address issues around current workload in relation to student enrolment. We will also partner with the department to plan future program offerings in ways that strengthen DHS while also situating the department as a vital part of cross-disciplinary conversations related to the health sciences at UTSC as SAMIH is established.

			<p>We appreciate the reviewers' concerns regarding our current workload and capacity to deliver, these concerns are valid given our faculty complement and student numbers. We aim to work with the Dean's Office in the short term to address those concerns while delivering high quality programs.</p> <p>In terms of program quality enhancement, we have started the process of continually reviewing the curriculum of each program with an eye to market trends, demands, and student needs. Under leadership of our chair and curriculum committee, we are carefully working to find ways to honor the academic integrity of each program while enhancing enrolments.</p>	
2		<p>"The Specialist program proposed by the department is one way the department could take advantage of existing required courses and allow students to choose from clusters of electives that represent the fundamental domains of health studies. A unified Major program could potentially use the same general approach, with strong consideration given to limiting to those cluster domains from which the department has multiple faculty able to teach."</p>	<p>Medium to long term: With the support of the Dean's Office, we are considering offering a Specialist Program in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences – an idea that has been under development within DHS for over two years and is supported by the HESA report. Given that we have a substantial proposal already written that leverages the department's existing strengths and courses, we believe there is real potential to foster collaboration with other units and program areas on campus, including Biological Sciences, Psychology, Neuroscience, Anthropology, Sociology, and Linguistics/Psycholinguistics, through relevant upper-level courses. The program features a foundational first- and second-year core curriculum, after which students can focus on specific clusters in their third year to develop a specialized area of expertise.</p>	<p>I appreciate the department's efforts and creativity in envisioning and proposing a new Health Sciences Specialist that will promote interdisciplinary collaboration with our other academic units in the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences.</p> <p>With the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH) expected to serve as a hub for education in the health sciences, new program development is something that my office and I will pursue strategically and collaboratively with DHS and other stakeholders both within and beyond UTSC. The HESA working group has been reactivated in 2024-25 under the leadership of Associate Dean Suzanne Sicchia, and this table will offer crucial support for the development of this, and related, programs in collaboration with DHS and other units.</p>

			<p>While clustering is possible within the credit constraints of a major program (7–9 credits), it is more effectively implemented in a Specialist program (12-16 credits). This approach also aligns with ongoing discussions around expanding health science-based programming across campus.</p>	
	3	<p>“Combine the Population Health and Health Policy programs into a single program with both HBA and HBSc degree options.”</p>	<p>The Department has carefully considered this suggestion and has decided to retain the two existing major programs in order to provide students with two Major options. In particular, we believe it is important to maintain the existing integrity of our BSc in light of provincial mandates. And in 2023-24, we made changes to strengthen the curriculum of each program to enhance their distinctiveness. We enhanced the science offerings in our BSc major giving it greater focus in population health and differentiated the focus of our BA with greater focus on health policy.</p> <p>The recommendation to consolidate or combine the majors likely stemmed from a naming convention where both are listed under the "Health Studies" umbrella (e.g., Health Studies – Health Policy and Health Studies – Population Health). However, "Health Studies" is not a formal parent program with defined streams, which has led to confusion and misrepresentation of our programs' structure. This naming convention is a remnant from the time when Health Studies was part of Anthropology and was unfortunately presented in an outdated way in online materials at the time of the review. After our review, we received permission and have been able to make some of our requests to remove the “Health Studies” on online materials.</p>	<p>I am proud of the different pathways and program pairings students can pursue with the various Major programs offered by the different UTSC departments, including DHS. I support DHS’s decision to maintain the two existing programs in Population Health and Health Policy, at least in the short term. This structure also reflects the ways in which many of our students combine programs at UTSC through the combination of two Majors. In addition, I support DHS’ efforts in working with my team to improve clarity on the information presented to students and advisors.</p>

<p>The reviewers observed that the overall number of DHS courses “appears larger than is reasonably sustainable with the existing faculty complement” and highlighted student concerns that some desirable courses are not offered most years; they recommended systematizing and streamlining processes for revising or discontinuing courses, and aligning the Department’s course offerings with strategic goals and teaching capacity.</p>	4	<p>“The decision-making process used by the department regarding if and when to discontinue courses — or to consider merging or otherwise substantially revising courses —... does appear to be based on ad hoc proposals by faculty rather than a strategic, systematic process to identify degree program wide goals and prioritize teaching capacity to meet those goals. Further, the discontinuation of courses could benefit from a more proactive approach... it seems that currently the question of whether or not to discontinue a course only comes up for discussion when a course repeatedly has low subscription and/or no available instructor for a number of terms or even years... Change in this area has the potential to significantly improve student, faculty, and staff experience with the programs.”</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing: The Department has recently had several faculty move into pre-tenure course releases or administrative positions which understandably has meant that some desirable courses had to be paused or taught by sessional instructors. While the Department has not retired many courses, we appreciate the idea of a systematic process to determine this and also want to be cautious as we welcome faculty back or find high quality alternative ways to offer desirable courses. Since the review, we put in place a system within our curriculum committee to engage in regular reviews of the curriculum with consideration for enrollment and student feedback and to review the learning outcomes of potentially low enrolled courses to ensure that each of these courses is relevant and in alignment with our mission. We are also working with the Dean’s Office to find ways to continue to deliver desirable courses that help meet student degree requirements.</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office applauds the department’s initiative in reviewing its course offerings more intentionally, taking into consideration factors such as changes in student enrolment, faculty complement, and healthcare trends. We will support them in this work as a part of the annual curriculum cycle, and in relation to program development, budget considerations, and student enrolment trends.</p>
	5	<p>“Right-size course offerings, based on programmatic strategic goals, to those which can be consistently taught by core faculty, inclusive of need for leaves and prioritize required courses over under-enrolled and/or elective courses in faculty teaching loads.”</p>	<p>Ongoing: Currently with the leadership of the Program Director and Chair, our curriculum committee works to structure course offerings and enrollment caps in courses in line with program growth figures while considering recruitment and strategic planning initiatives and mandates. For example, we have limited the number of D-level courses we offer and recognize that we need additional faculty hires in order to better attend to recent upsurges in student growth and the need for more stability in course offerings with 3 of our faculty in significant leadership positions and 12 of our faculty in pre-tenure related course releases.</p>	<p>My office and I will continue to work with the department to discuss issues pertaining to faculty complement and workload, as well as overall strategic enrolment management.</p>

<p>The reviewers noted that, although health studies course offerings cover a broad range of content areas, it is less clear that they also cover a broad array of skill areas. They suggested that DHS take a more intentional approach to the scaffolding of skills across courses, including quantitative and qualitative research skills as well as other foundational skill domains in the field.</p>	6	<p>“Current courses represent a very broad range of content areas within the field of health studies, but it is less clear that a broad range of skill areas are also represented... there may be room for greater intentionality at the program level regarding scaffolding of skills across courses – not only quantitative and qualitative research skills, but also other foundational skill domains in the field such as information literacy, health communication for different audiences, community and stakeholder engagement, quality improvement and evaluation.”</p>	<p>Short and medium term: Currently we are scaffolding courses that enhance research skills: numerical literacy has been a key area of discussion among our curriculum committee and at our faculty meetings for over two years. Both qualitative feedback and quantitative data have informed our approach to integrating and scaffolding numerical literacy across the program. For example, a new Applied Statistics for Public Health course was introduced at the B-level to address knowledge gaps identified in C-level Community Health and Epidemiology. This initiative also allowed us to scaffold skills backward, bridging gaps as far back as high school, to better prepare students for success. We have also introduced a new course which focuses on Black community engagement by developing student skills in health communication, promotion and health literacy, and we have courses in Policy Evaluation (HLTD11H3), Community Health and Wellness (offered as an advanced topic in partnership with TAIBU Community Health Centre, HLTD47H3), Critical Health Education (HLTD80H3), and quality improvement (offered as an advanced topic, HLTD29H3). We also have several new initiatives to provide our students with more applied skills. For example, a new partnership with CanPath will provide students and faculty with access to synthetic data that will allow them to apply their research methods skills in real-world settings.</p>	<p>My office and I commend the department for leveraging Advanced Topics courses to test out and introduce students to emerging health studies-related topics, as well as research and skill development areas. This important testing ground helps the department and the Dean’s Office identify which areas and skills would be strong candidates for the development of new permanent courses. The Dean’s Office looks forward to the results of the department’s partnership with CanPath to provide program students with the opportunity to work with synthetic data as part of their coursework.</p>
	7	<p>“...connecting with stakeholders – such as co-op placement site supervisors, those who hire department graduates, and graduate / professional programs attended by graduates – regarding gaps in needed skills and workforce capacity may provide a valuable source of</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing: We have initiated an alumni survey initiative with our Office of Development and Alumni Relations, which will gather data on alumni’s careers after graduating and their feedback on our programs’ curriculum and structure in the context of current</p>	<p>My office and I applaud the department’s initiatives to reach out and connect with program alumni to get their input on curriculum in relation to students’ future readiness. Bringing program alumni back on campus to connect with our students not only maintains students’ sense of</p>

		feedback for skills that could be explicitly targeted within existing courses.”	research and employment environments. Since this review, we have a renewed focus on work and professional program readiness through several ongoing initiatives. For example, we have developed a successful Allied Health Speaker Series that brings in current health professionals (often graduates of our programs) to speak about career pathways. We also conducted a gap analysis while researching comparable programs during the development of the Specialist. These efforts have directly influenced the creation of the Applied Statistics course and collaborations with coursework in departments such as Physiology, Development, and Anatomy into our curriculum.	belonging but further builds students’ professional networks. This is also an area where future divisional and tri-campus work is needed to better track graduates and better enable program-specific communication and outreach opportunities with alumni.
The reviewers raised several concerns regarding the size of the DHS faculty complement as it relates to program sustainability and departmental goals. They recommended prioritizing an expansion of the faculty complement when opportunities permit, balanced across rank and tenure/teaching streams, “to address the high student to core faculty ratio, to refine programming and the expansion of experiential opportunities, and to strengthen clusters of faculty in areas of core research strength.”	8	“We agree with the assessment in the DHS Self-Study report that there is a need to increase the faculty complement to address the high student to core faculty ratio... to refine programming and the expansion of experiential opportunities, and to strengthen clusters of faculty in areas of core research strength.”	<p>Ongoing: Currently we are hiring in the area of Health Informatics and Health Professions & Practice. These two hires will help increase our faculty complement and directly address some of the skill areas identified in the comments above (e.g., numerical and information literacy, health communications).</p> <p>Medium and longer term: We are hoping to continue to hire in fields relevant to Allied Health Professions and that help us build strength in for our Health Humanities Minor, our Minor in Aging & Society, and in support of the HESA report and SAMIH initiative.</p>	My office and I will continue to have regular dialogue with the chair of the department on matters pertaining to faculty complement and hiring, recognizing the significant role the department plays in supporting UTSC’s health sciences initiative and the establishment of SAMIH.
	9	“Commit to at least doubling the current faculty complement in the coming five years, balanced across rank and tenure-track/teaching streams, with additional faculty hires as needed to compensate for faculty in administrative leadership roles.”	<p>Short to medium term: We view this recommendation as essential to fulfilling our commitment to the SAMIH initiative, the HESA report, and to creating the next generation of allied health professionals in the Scarborough region. Implementing item 8, with</p>	Please see response to recommendation #8.

			the leadership of the Dean, will support this in the short to medium term, as we are hoping to increase our faculty complement, particularly because of past deficits that have been coupled with steady growth in student enrolment.	
	10	“Strengthening research relationships for faculty and graduate students, and indicating the interdisciplinary breadth of faculty, is the diversity of graduate appointment of DHS faculty, totaling 12 graduate unit cross appointments... While this diversity indicates interdisciplinarity, it may also be indicative of a lack of consolidation around core research thematic areas. There is a danger in appointing ‘n’s of 1’ and future hiring should be in accordance with a well-thought out strategic research plan that builds strengths around core health and social challenges.”	<p>Our interdisciplinarity is unique and makes our program stand out across the Tri-Campus. The diversity of graduate appointment of DHS faculty, totaling 12 graduate unit cross appointments adds to its complexity and is also a strength.</p> <p>Short to medium term: We hope to consolidate any needed hires and to build clusters around core research areas, such as Allied Health and Health Education, Health Humanities, Aging, Community Health, Paramedicine, Research Methods and Methodologies, and Statistics and Data Sciences (including Health Informatics).</p>	I appreciate the department’s identification of core research areas that would benefit from future hires. The clusters identified align closely with campus strategic priorities. In the current budget environment, my office and I are also working actively to align future hiring to these priority areas. We will continue to engage in regular dialogue with the chair of the department as well as with the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation at UTSC in considering how best to enhance research supports and cluster opportunities.
	11	“Due to high service duties, the career progression of junior faculty members is jeopardized if their scholarship is not protected. Future hires across the ranks, including senior ranks who can assume larger workloads including mentorship responsibilities, can mitigate this situation and help ensure junior faculty are successfully promoted.”	<p>Ongoing: Since the review, this item is something that has been discussed with the Vice-Dean, Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success and will require the leadership of the Dean to gain clarity regarding whether their might be near-term future hires at senior ranks and regarding more specific or innovative forms of motivation for faculty in senior ranks who can assume larger workloads within the department, such as mentorship responsibilities.</p>	Please see response to recommendation #8. We recognize the pressures that the department has been experiencing. In addition to complement and administrative considerations, we also see mentorship, workload, and faculty progression as key components of this work.
The reviewers observed that faculty leaves and teaching releases can have an impact on the Department’s teaching capacity; they recommended the development of mechanisms to ensure that core and elective courses,	12	“Develop and ratify a teaching equity policy that considers an equitable balance of core and elective courses, class size, and reasons for teaching release.”	<p>Longer term: With the support of the Vice-Dean, Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success, and the Dean, the Department plans to focus on establishing a teaching equity policy that considers an equitable balance of core and elective courses, class size,</p>	My office and I look forward to working with the department, guiding them toward the development of a departmental teaching equity policy that considers the different factors as identified by the reviewers.

class sizes, and teaching releases are equitably balanced for faculty.			and reasons for teaching release in the short to medium term.	
The reviewers raised concerns regarding UTSC's shared staffing model, commenting that it limits capacity to support planned expansions in student programs and to leverage opportunities arising from DHS involvement in SAMIH. They recommended exploring ways to "allow adequate departmental capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement."	13	"The DHS operates with a small and committed staff complement, but their ability to advance DHS interests, especially strategically, is limited by the fact that most of the staff serve 3 units at UTSC simultaneously, and one staff serves 6 units...We recommend that by the time of the move [to SAMIH], core staff, especially an Assistant Chair/Director Administration, Operations and Strategic Planning, be allocated to the unit."	Short term and ongoing: This is an immediate concern that will require the short-term leadership of the Dean and Chair as we face the move into the new SAMIH/Garron building. We are in conversations about proposals we have developed for a revised staff structure. Increased staff support and infrastructure is crucial for our ability as a department to grow our research interests and academic output.	We are working with the department to address these concerns. The planned move to the new SAMIH / Garron building offers an important moment to address staffing needs in relation to new space configurations for the department.
	14	"Increase staff positions dedicated to DHS by at least 2.5 FTE, to allow adequate departmental capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement."	Short term and ongoing: We are in conversations about proposals we have developed for a revised staff structure as we move into the new SAMIH/Garron building and in light of major growth within our department. There is an immediate need for this that will require the support of the Dean.	See response to recommendation #13.
The reviewers recommended that equitable access to research space be provided for dry lab researchers and their teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students. They further recommended additional consultation with faculty and the allocation of temporary space to meet current needs in advance of the planned move to SAMIH.	15	"Provide equitable access to research space for "dry lab" researchers and their substantial research teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students. These space requirements may be met in the planned SAMIH, however, more consultation should be undertaken with DHS faculty and temporary space should be provided to address current needs."	Ongoing: Since this review, we are forming a departmental committee for 2025-26 to address space allocations for the move into the SAMIH/Garron building which will take place in 2026-27.	My office and I look forward to advocating spacing allocation needs on behalf of the department when engaging in discussions with the Office of the Vice-President & Principal and the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation as the construction of the Myron and Berna Garron Health Sciences Complex (SAMIH) continues and nears completion.
The reviewers noted student, staff, and faculty desire for additional opportunities for community building and support; suggestions included a departmental orientation, social activities for DHS faculty and staff, and	16	"...a clear theme emerged from both student comments and discussions with staff and more junior faculty about the need for additional opportunities for community building and support... Given that peer institutions are providing such opportunities and resources at the	Ongoing: We also recognize the need for additional opportunities for community building and support and intend to work with the Department of Community Partnerships and Engagement at UTSC, to work with HSSA (our affiliated student	My office and I commend the department's efforts to work with other UTSC offices and colleagues to build students' sense of belonging and increase students' opportunities to interact with and learn from peers, faculty members, and alumni, and professionals working in various

<p>support activities and resources during stressful times.</p>		<p>department or program level to cultivate a culture of caring and a sense of belonging, especially among minoritized and first-generation university students, additional resources to support this work for such a vibrantly growing set of degree programs is merited.”</p>	<p>association), and to work more closely with our Co-op Office and other campus units to build strength here. In addition, we will continue to run our Allied Health Speaker Series. Following this review, we are launching our first DHS Research Day, where awards to increase recognition, belonging and inclusion will be presented and where students and faculty can present and discuss their research. The department remains open to developing relationships with the Office of Student Experience and Wellbeing to help further the culture of caring and sense of belonging students feel in our program and more broadly, on campus. We welcome support from the Dean's Office & select HESA Chairs to maximize impact and strengthen partnerships and collaboration.</p>	<p>health studies fields. The Dean's Office is actively supporting this work, in particular in relation to the Pathways for Health Professions Certificate and related co-curricular initiatives.</p>
<p>The reviewers recommended that DHS create a strategic research and academic plan, aligned with institutional strategy and goals; they noted that the plan should include a clear vision and mission to define the Department's academic priorities and commitments, guiding future hiring decisions and the establishment of research clusters.</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>“The DHS would benefit from a strategic research and academic plan with a clear vision and mission that then motivates its educational programs, research clusters and associated faculty hiring. The strategic plan should be refreshed at least every 5 years and consider institutional strategic plans. Students and external partners, especially community partners in the region, should be consulted in the development of the strategic plan.”</p>	<p>Short to medium term: Recognizing that we would benefit from a strategic research and academic plan with a clear vision and mission, we held a set of retreats and consultations in preparation for our review in September 2023, December 2023, January 2024, and following our review in September 2024 and December 2024 with a wide range of stakeholders relevant to DHS under the leadership of the chair. Subsequently at our retreat in December 2024 and February 2025, we brought in an external consultant who helped us formulate a clear mission, vision, and provided guidance on our strategic research and academic plan, which we are currently in the process of sharing on our website and in our public facing documents. We welcome support from the Dean's Office to ensure that our strategic plans are in alignment with the SAMIH initiative and consistent with budgetary realities.</p>	<p>I am delighted to hear that the department has convened the last couple of months to formulate its latest mission and vision, which will help set the tone of the department and its goals and objectives moving forward. My office and I look forward to reviewing, and offering our input to, the department's newly developed strategic research and academic plans. We see strong alignment with the work that the department is doing and campus strategic priorities, and see the department as playing a pivotal role in cross-disciplinary conversations related to the health sciences at UTSC as SAMIH is established.</p>

	18	“Align research priorities with a strategic plan, mission, and values statement to strengthen interdisciplinary priority clusters and to develop areas of uniqueness, for which DHS will become known. Consolidate first around areas of strength with recruitment and then build out new research clusters.”	Medium to longer term: In response to the reviewer’s recommendations and as mentioned in item #17, we are working to align our research priorities with the strategic plan, mission, and values statement we have developed with the support of an external consultation. To this effect, we are consolidating and strengthening our interdisciplinary priority clusters and intend to continue to revisit this over the next several years as our faculty complement strengthens.	Please see response to recommendation #17.
The reviewers observed that UTSC has a number of programs and initiatives to support Indigenous students, but noted that it was not clear how much DHS students can access them; they recommended close attention to the recruitment, retention, and success rates of Indigenous students, and exploring whether Indigenous students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship.	19	“The UTSC hosts several Indigenous initiatives... but most of these seem to be associated with the Sociology program. It is not clear to what extent, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the DHS can access these initiatives. Again, with a clear strategic plan, the DHS could specify how its students can engage in these initiatives through their academic curricula. In particular, it would be important to identify Indigenous students and monitor their recruitment, retention and success rates, as well as to explore whether Indigenous students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship.”	Medium term: The Department is committed to Indigenous initiatives as evidenced by the research concentrations of four core faculty. Currently, we participate in the UTSC Working Circle with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. As well, we are developing a section within our departmental website to feature core research and coursework directly relevant to Indigenous Initiatives. The page will include information about relevant DHS courses; research projects from our faculty and research assistants as well as graduate students’ openings for these projects. In addition, to achieve this medium-term goal, we are working with UTSC’s Registrar’s Office, Admissions and Student Recruitment Office, Development and Alumni Relations Office, and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives with respect to data and alumni tracking.	The Dean’s Office applauds the department’s efforts to work with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and other offices to collect data and track the progress of students. The Dean’s Office supports the department’s initiative to highlight research and coursework that intersect with Indigenous initiatives. This is work that also connects to the UTSC campus curriculum review, which has been led by the Dean’s Office. With the establishment of Indigenous House in June 2025, we anticipate further opportunities to strengthen Indigenous research and curriculum at UTSC. We appreciate the reviewers’ comments about the importance of assessing potential barriers for Indigenous students in co-op, research, mentorship, and other areas, and we will continue to partner with the department, with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and other units at UTSC and across the University of Toronto to address these concerns.
	20	“Prospectively collect equity-related data and provide to all departments (including DHS) in a de-identified manner that allows monitoring and intervention for barriers to access and success within departmental programs.”	Short term and ongoing: This is an area of priority for us as a department and we will work with the Dean’s Office to implement the UTSC commitments to this effort as stated in the Scarborough Charter, the U of T	The Dean’s Office is committed to the goals of inclusive excellence outlined in the campus strategic plan, and will continue to collaborate with the department and with offices such as the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Admissions and Student Recruitment, and the Department of

			Anti-Black Racism Task Force Report, and other relevant resources.	Community Partnerships on examining and removing barriers to access for students enrolled in DHS's programs. The university as a whole is also moving towards collecting more comprehensive equity-related data which is crucial to support this work.
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	21	"Numerical literacy at the level required, especially in the Population Health program may need to be addressed through enhancing educational supports or addition of a numeracy-skills-focused course specific to population health."	<p>Short term and ongoing: Plans to enhance numerical literacy have become a priority for the Department. For further clarification, please refer to the response in point 6 above. As well, please note that we are working with the Registrar's Office and the Office of Admissions and Student Recruitment to add Grade 12 math as recommended (but not required) in recruitment publications for prospective students (e.g., Viewbook) as of next year. To address preparation gaps, we have also revised our program requirements, mandating students take a specific general statistics course in their first year (STAB23H3). This ensures they avoid the more commonly selected statistics course, which explicitly minimizes mathematical calculations in its description.</p> <p>The previous scaffolding was as follows:</p> <p>STAB22H3 (Statistics I) or STAB23H3 (Introduction to Statistics for the Social Sciences) in Year 1 or 2 HLTB15H3 (Health Research Methodologies) and HLTB16H3 (Public Health) in Year 2 HLTC27H3 (Community Health and Epidemiology) in Year 3</p> <p>The current scaffolding is now (for Population Health):</p> <p>Grade 12 Math recommended (any)</p>	The Dean's Office supports the department's efforts to better scaffold skills across its course offerings and clarify expectations for students. The Centre for Teaching and Learning is a crucial resource for the department in this area. The programs and curriculum team in the Dean's Office is also available to advise on strategies for strengthening scaffolding structures in the department's curricular offerings without compromising the department's commitment to equity and access.

			<p>STAB23H3 (Introduction to Statistics for the Social Sciences) in Year 1 HLTB15H3 (Health Research Methodologies), HLTB16H3 (Public Health), and HLTB27H3 (Applied Statistics for Public Health) in Year 2 HLTC27H3 (Community Health and Epidemiology) in Year 3.</p> <p>This work has been completed since the review under the leadership of the chair, working closely with the Program Coordinator.</p>	
22	<p>“...in the absence of broader alumni-specific data from the institution, engagement with community partners who commonly hire and/or admit program graduates for their feedback on current degree program quality and the performance of its graduates may be worth considering.”</p>	<p>Medium term: We have sought support from the Development and Alumni Relations Office and are actively working with students and alumni and community organizations (including but not limited to the Scarborough Health Network) to build sustainable relationships that will help increase hiring opportunities for our students. This is a medium-term goal that requires support of the Dean’s Office and the Research Office.</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office supports the department’s collaborations with the Development and Alumni Relations Office and other community organizations to monitor trends and emerging areas of skill development for students and graduates in health studies-related programs.</p>	
23	<p>“Develop and maintain stronger relationships with community partners and alumni, to enhance experiential learning opportunities and access to program outcome data.”</p>	<p>Longer term: Through their research projects, our faculty have developed numerous partnerships with local, national, and international community partners. We will be exploring how those relationships can be leveraged for the department to carry out its new mission, vision, and values more effectively. In 2023, we initiated the Allied Health Speaker Series and are keen to work with others across the campus and in relation to SAMIH continue to develop and maintain stronger relationships with community partners and alumni, to enhance experiential learning opportunities and access to program outcome data. This is a longer-term goal that we will work with the Experiential Learning</p>	<p>The Dean’s Office supports the department’s efforts to work with the various offices within UTSC and with community partners to further develop and continually refine experiential learning opportunities to meet the needs of students, alumni, and employers. We are also prioritizing clearer data-gathering related to experiential learning to better support the department and the campus as a whole in meeting the SMA goal of 100% engagement with experiential learning. Experiential learning is a historic strength of UTSC and a significant priority for the future.</p>	

			team to brainstorm ideas and implement opportunities.	
24	“At present, students are not formally included in DHS committees, and the reviewers believe this is a missed opportunity to engage students who are future alumni and leaders. As the department matures, thought should be given to the appropriate governance mechanisms that distribute the burden between strategy development and operational decision making.”		Short term and ongoing: We have strong engagement with students through HSSA and other student associations which ensure student feedback and input while we develop formal engagement opportunities through committee membership for the future. We have begun to implement this in curriculum and our current faculty search committees based on the feedback from this review.	The Dean’s Office commends the department’s efforts to get more of their program students involved in the department’s decision making.
25	“Build consistent discretionary funding into the department budget for the chair to use for evolving departmental priorities, such as undergraduate research assistantships, etc.”		The department is open to exploring this further and will defer to the Dean’s Office for guidance.	The Dean’s Office is currently in dialogue with departments to assess budget needs as the campus prepares to move to a new budgetary model. We recognize the importance of some degree of flexibility and autonomy for departments within budgetary frameworks.
26	“Provide training for DHS leadership in advancement and access to advancement professionals at UofT to develop and implement an integrated alumni relations and advancement strategy for DHS.”		Short term and ongoing: Following the March 2024 cyclical review of the department, we worked with the UTSC Development and Alumni Relations Office to introduce a new scholarship for our students. This initiative has raised over \$50,000 for two endowed scholarships to be awarded annually to students studying Aging & Society. Through our continued collaboration with this office, an additional scholarship will be introduced in the next year. The current chair is very open to engaging in additional training.	The Dean’s Office appreciates the department’s collaboration with the Development and Alumni Relations Office to discuss and implement advancement and alumni engagement strategies.

3 Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary accurately described the full review and that overall, they had found the review to be positive. The Dean's administrative response had mostly addressed issues identified by the review, noting that steps were already in progress to address concerns. The Reading Group asked the Department to further address the concerns regarding progress toward program enhancement, specifically the proposed increase of dedicated staff positions and faculty complement, building consistent discretionary funding into the department's budget for the Chair to support evolving departmental priorities, and "appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods for assessing student achievement."

Michelle Silver, Chair, Department of Health and Society ("DHS") responded that the department comprises faculty from health, humanities, sciences and social sciences. They had embarked on a collaborative effort to evaluate how assessments took place. She noted that a large group of students had engaged with the assessors during the site visit, and their feedback was related to exam policy and the fact that exams were returned without comments at the end of the term. They had explored ways to provide feedback to honor the exam policy, noting that the types of assessments in the humanities courses were different than the lab-based courses. She remarked that they would continue to discuss and collaborate to ensure that the assessments were substantially different and reflected appropriate student learning.

Katie Larson, Vice-Dean, Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs, reported that regarding faculty complement planning, DHS played an important role in the broader campus-wide strategy connected to preparations for The Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health ("SAMIH") Garron building. UTSC undertook limited strategic hires related to SAMIH and the Health Sciences, which was a priority. DHS was actively involved from a curricular perspective, regarding program demand and program expansion as Health Sciences were further established at UTSC. This was an ongoing priority and as the move was planned to SAMIH, DHS was part of the shared staffing considerations to ensure that they had the staffing resources that they needed.

Regarding the budget considerations, there were ongoing budget discussions with all departments in the current fiscal context, to ensure that the Department Chairs had the resources that they needed. She noted that they were shifting towards a new budget model, which provided departments with more autonomy over their finances.

No follow-up report was requested.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the department's "unique and highly valuable blend of courses" that approach health from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and noted that "students graduate

with a more holistic view of health and society.” They commended the opportunities for experiential learning in the Department’s programs, and observed that students praised the quality of instruction and the creation of safe learning environments in which they can bring their diverse lived experience to discussions of complex health and social issues. They highlighted the department’s strengths in adopting universal design principles and proactive disability-related accommodations, particularly in upper-year courses. They applauded the department’s exceptional new faculty hiring decisions, and noted the content expertise and full engagement with research and skills development in teaching and learning among teaching faculty. Finally, the reviewers highlighted the potential for inclusion in the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health to enhance the Department’s research profile and impact.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: considering future strategic directions for the Population Health and Health Policy programs, including potential integration, light of current workload and capacity to deliver; systematizing and streamlining processes for revising or discontinuing courses and aligning the Department’s course offerings with strategic goals and teaching capacity; taking a more intentional approach to the scaffolding of skills across courses, including quantitative and qualitative research skills as well as other foundational skill domains in the field; prioritizing expansion of the faculty complement when opportunities permit, balanced across rank and tenure/teaching streams, “to address the high student to core faculty ratio, to refine programming and the expansion of experiential opportunities, and to strengthen clusters of faculty in areas of core research strength”; developing mechanisms to ensure that core and elective courses, class sizes, and teaching releases are equitably balanced for faculty; exploring ways to “allow adequate departmental capacity for strategic planning, student support, research and financial management, and community engagement”; providing equitable access to research space for dry lab researchers and their teams to foster collaboration and research-related experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students; consulting with faculty and allocating temporary space to meet current needs in advance of the planned move to SAMIH; creating additional opportunities for community building and support such as a departmental orientation, social activities for DHS faculty and staff, and support activities and resources during stressful times; creating a strategic research and academic plan that includes a clear vision and mission to define the Department’s academic priorities and commitments, guiding future hiring decisions and the establishment of research clusters; paying close attention to recruitment, retention, and success rates of Indigenous students, and exploring whether Indigenous students may disproportionately experience barriers to participating in co-op, undergraduate research experience, and/or access to mentorship.

The Dean’s Administrative Response describes the unit’s responses to the reviewers’ recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Health and Society.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs in 2028 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will take place no later than the 2031-32 academic year.

6 Distribution

On August 15th, 2025, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean of UTSC, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.